







# Campfire Tonight!

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With a FOREWORD by EFFIE POWER

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*To the*  
**BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA**

*especially*

**Troop 5, Little Falls, N. Y.**

**Troop 12, Ann Arbor, Mich.**

**Troop 101, Roslyn, L. I., N. Y.**

**Troop 500, Manhattan, N. Y.**

## PREFACE

**I**F THIS LITTLE BOOK could talk it would say "Thanks" to many boys and girls in many places, to dozens of grown-ups and to uncounted numbers of literary characters. With the author's magic wand I may enable it to speak its appreciation to a few of the many.

First of all to those comrades of the Scout Trail—to Brother Edmund and Robert Amsden, to Elmer Conklin and Larry Abt and above all to Bill Bishop, Jr., whose keen interest in story-telling polished many a rough edge. To the leadership of Troop 500, Manhattan, that allowed my organization of a long range story program. To Dr. DeAlton Partridge and Dr. H. W. Hurt of the Boy Scout Headquarter staff who so patiently advised me. And finally to Walter MacPeck, Scout executive of Ann Arbor, Michigan, who jelled in cold print the ideas, wise or otherwise, I had on the subject. Next to Miss Richards and Miss Carryl of the staff of the Little Falls Public Library who extended every courtesy in making the books mentioned in the script available. Finally to Miss Cecelia Reusch and Donal Hurley who criticized the original manuscript and read proof.

The Foreword by Miss Effie Power bespeaks my long admiration for her outstanding contribution to literature for young people—it deepens my personal debt to her.

To the friendly interest of many others in my various endeavors, again "Thanks."

R. J. H.

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## FOREWORD

NOT LONG AGO I was invited to lead a discussion on boys' reading at a father and son banquet. Assured of my reception I accepted, but not without some qualms, remembering the times I had been called upon to defend charges of femininity in children's books. I spent a most delightful evening and went away the richer by the experience but I made up my mind then and there that more men must be persuaded to assume leadership in this important field.

After some search I found two recruits but, in general, social and religious workers, teachers and business men pleaded lack of time for the required reading and hinted at lack of respect for the common run of children's books. My answer was that there was a literature for children which they enjoy; that the Public Library existed to aid workers in their selection of materials; that they dared not be indifferent to what their young people were reading if they wished to know the motives behind their behavior.

Children's librarians have had a strong and wholesome influence on book production and young people's reading. Among them are a few men. More are needed. My search is still on.

When the author of *Campfire Tonight* came to my classroom night after night following a long day as librarian in a distant school, I knew that he was prompted by a real purpose. His understanding of and love for boys and his appreciation of the dignity and fineness of their literature as well as its human appeal, are evident in the pages which follow. He has succeeded in bringing books and boys together in lasting bonds. He has found recreation in story-telling and a "shortening of the road." He has blazed a clear trail for other readers to follow.

EFFIE POWER

## INTRODUCING YOU TO "CAMPFIRE TONIGHT!"

THE TITLE of this little brain-child does not convey complete information about the contents. Perhaps we should still follow the practice of the early days of printing, when the title was an elaborate summary of the book and spun itself down the page. There is a table of contents included though that also fails to tell the whole story. I hope that with a little panning you may find the gold that has been brought to the surface for your enrichment.

The volume is for anyone who likes to tell stories; wants to tell more of them or better ones, or tell them a bit more expertly. Scattered throughout the pages and gathered into convenient lists, are short stories, poems, plays, legends, tall stories, novels and collections which actual practice has tested and proven worthwhile. Intermingled with these suggestions are references to methods in handling your stories, yourself and your audience. Methods and materials are all of one cloth and I hope this is woven to wear well as the reader uses it.

Especially is this for those who are responsible for either indoor or outdoor campfires. This word "campfire" is used in the most general sense and both stories and methods can be applied in broad daylight. A good story-teller can compete with almost anything except the forces of Nature. The campfire by its peculiar characteristics provides an ideal setting for stories; hence the stress laid upon this element in the following pages. The word "telling" also includes reading, though this is treated strictly in lower key. Also included in the term "stories" are poems and plays, history and biography. So you really do have to set to work sluicing this deposit to find the gold.

The audience considered is the adolescent. This group seems to have been forgotten in the development of the art. A leader looking for materials finds most of them suited to younger

children and not for the " in-betweens " who in spite of chameleon behavior patterns, have their own likes and dislikes. Youngsters from twelve to seventeen are the focus of the selection. Every group has its own idiosyncrasies but common sense is the best guide here.

If you ring the bell, your listeners will let you know.

RICHARD JAMES HURLEY

*July 4, 1940*

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## CHAPTER I

### THE FEEL OF THE CAMPFIRE

THE WORD "CAMPFIRE" is probably a concept to most of us. It conveys no single thought or idea but a great mixture of associations that revolve around a common center. Physicists might compare it to the solar system theory of the atom about whose nucleus circle planetary electrons. Many of these associations are emotional. They include something besides time and place and people — overtones that color one's character; nuances of feeling that spell an enriched personality. The leap of the flames, the smoke of the fire, the small noises of the night, the laughter and songs of our companions, these remain long after all other recollections are replaced by fresh experiences. The campfire does something to us and in a very personal way. The term "individual differences" might characterize its peculiar charm. The primitive appeal of fire has long been stressed by anthropologists. It is a basic human need. But there is a psychic hunger that youngsters have — and oldsters too — beyond their natural primitive urges. The campfire can best be defined in terms of satisfying our desire for things which are neither spoken nor written but *felt*.

THE STAGE IS SET. Because of this magnetism that the leaping, dancing flames exert, the campfire is used as a focus for certain activities. The gamut of these runs from silly stunts through contests, songs and marshmallow toasting to storytelling, moral talks and prayer. There is an element of abuse as well as of use in all this. The attitude towards most campfire programs is strictly pragmatic — if they work they must be correct. But the campfire as we know it is seldom a utilitarian tool. We do not use it for light, for heat or for chemical experiments. Instead its value to us lies in the subtle rapport it effects in a group. The campfire is unlike any other element we use in our programs and thus by its peculiar nature it attracts a

particular kind of treatment. Often the campfire is the feature of outdoor life. "*Campfire tonight!*" is a magical phrase that sets many a youngster's spine tingling. In eager anticipation they begin to assemble before the sun has dropped out of the sky. Or indoors they eye the clock until campfire period has arrived. It is an honor to light the fire. It is even an honor to gather the wood and arrange it properly; an honor that was well tested one rainy afternoon in the Adirondacks and not found wanting.

**NOT MERE ENTERTAINMENT — BUT RE-CREATION.** With all of this intrinsic value, the campfire activities should be carefully selected and bear some continuity of theme. The principle of "any old thing" cheapens the price of this rare gem we hold. We want the experience to be enjoyable yet there is an all too commercial angle to this fun in some groups. It is not mere entertainment but re-creation. Youngsters can attend the movies, listen to maudlin juvenile radio programs, go to circuses and watch football games for entertainment. But to make them active participants, to stir them to action, to attune them to a broader, deeper life — that is re-creation. The implications of this might be taken to mean a child-centered campfire. But not necessarily child conducted because intelligent youngsters realize their limitations and like to learn from adults who have the knack for teaching.

**STORY-TELLING A TWO-WAY PROCESS.** Story-telling is one activity that meets every demand of the true campfire activity. The story merges with the psychological climate created by the campfire to become a personal experience. The teller, filled with the richness of his story, transmutes it into rare materials by the alchemy of the listener's imagination. The camp becomes the hot Indian desert; the forest, the streets of Bagdad; the building a castellated tower of the Crusaders; the wind the voice of the Great Spirit. True, some of the audience may fall asleep or entirely miss the point, but it is seldom that one good story will not be followed by an insistent demand for another. And just as a satisfied customer is one's best advertisement, so a good story-telling program will sell a camp for an organization.

**AN ANCIENT AND HONORED HERITAGE.** This business of story-telling is as old as the art of communication. When the

cave men were still in the grunting stage, their artists were drawing the record of bison hunts and hairy mammoths. Before the American Indian had a written language as we understand the term, his pictographs told of war parties and tribal history. In all primitive groups certain men took upon themselves the role of historians to preserve by word of mouth the legend and fact essential to the life of the tribe. The Celts had their professional singers and poets to keep alive the vital flames of racial tradition. We are still mining the rich vein of bardic literature. The great heroic sagas of the Norse were entrusted to the skalds and no wassail was complete without a recital. Later we find the Minnesingers of Germany and the troubadours of France and Italy vending their lyrics from town to town. These and the minstrels and the gleemen are all our honored predecessors — progenitors of today's novelists, poets and dramatists. We are therefore, in our story-telling, of an ancient and honored heritage.

**THE OLDEST OF THE ARTS.** Moreover, ours is the oldest of the arts. Man has always felt the urge to communicate whether by crude paints on a Stone Age wall or by television. He used pantomime when sounds failed and when language unlocked our intelligence, combined a rhythmic chorus with the pantomime. Back of the Indian toe-heel and the African shuffle is a story in the telling. The chorus and the dance developed into the drama which gave a three-dimensional presentation to the story-telling. The folk songs and ballads of our mountaineers, cowboys and lumberjacks are but developments of this urge to express experiences of our own or others. The novel, especially the historical, is a late manifestation. In the rising tide of nationalism we are trying to recapture the soul of America and to re-develop the sinews of its greatness. And this through story-telling.

**A PRACTICAL USABLE ART.** There is a mixture of methods — oral and silent, extemporaneous and prepared, fact and fancy, prose and poetry. Each has its own significant part to play and in the fusion of these we find the real art of story-telling. Some might protest that it is also a science, a body of theory. We must have some idea of what it is and how and why it functions. But story-telling is preeminently an art — a practical usable

thing. When a story is told a good many things happen, physical and mental, to both reciter and the audience. These differ on every occasion. It is doubtful if there really is a typical campfire or bit of story-telling, which may make the art seem very simple to some and very complex to others.

**WISHFUL THINKING.** In our mind's eye we probably have a real or fancied picture of some particular instance. For a long time there was in my literary workshop a picture of a Boy Scout campfire scene. A group of khaki-clad youngsters squatted in a circle about a cheery fire listening to their leader tell a story. In the background rose the serried ranks of trees. There were none of the possible irritations in the picture — no mosquitoes, no threatening thunder heads, no blinding smoke, no poison ivy. The scene was *de rigueur* in the very best sense. Every Scout was alert, every eye on the leader, every face alive with interest. The teller was at his ease, engrossed in the recital and evidently putting it across with the proficiency of an old-timer. That picture was and is an inspiration. If only that would happen to me! But it never will because no two campfires are ever the same.

**DIVERGENT INTERESTS OF BOYS AND GIRLS.** To prove this point of "individualism" we might do a bit of sampling. The scientific procedure would dictate that we include a proper mixture of the youth of America; groups by age, locale and socio-economic backgrounds. My experience comes mainly from Scouting but these live-wire boys, as red-blooded as any that live, are typical of our adolescent male. From the literature of reading interests of children it is evident that there is an ever widening divergence of interests by boys and girls after the age of ten. The gang age arrives and boys go with boys and girls with girls until about the age of sixteen when they tend to find mutual interests again. It is well to know the interests during this middle period of "sturm und drang." But the methods of story-telling apply to all. Let us examine the samples taken from mountain and lake, indoors and out.

**FITTING THE STORY TO THE SITUATION.** The time is late June. The place is a bit of dune-land along the Lake Huron shore in the Province of Ontario at a dot on the map euphuistically called Port Franks. The characters are a dozen Scouts from

Ann Arbor, Michigan. With the long stretches of barren shore, the fantastic forms of the dunes and the drum of the restless lake, it has taken on the motif of a pirate camp. All of us wear large red bandanna headdresses and have ugly names like Bloodybones Bill. Last night we had a treasure hunt with a vast chest of pieces of eight found under a cottonwood. Incidentally, we ate the treasure! Tonight is campfire! Nestled among high dunes we have found an ideal hollow for the fire. Night falls and the stars sparkle in the sky. The driftwood fire sends shadows scurrying. We sing a few favorites, including *Blow the Man Down*. Then we turn to listening, for a poem is being read. We begin to laugh, for it is *The Yarn of the Nancy Bell*. The leader ends and glances up with a grin. Do we want another? You bet! We wonder what it will be. Oh yes, *Robinson Crusoe's Story* — another poem that fits in with our pirate camp. That too makes us chuckle. But Kipling's *The Ballad of the Clampherdown* is something different; there is a martial "zip" in that one. How the scuppers ran with blood that memorable day! Longfellow's *Saga of King Olaf* is also different, being read with the peculiar cadence of rowing. One felt the Vikings pushing their dragon-ships into the foaming waves. Back and forth went the beat of the lines as the legendary race drew to an end. The ballad of *Sir Patrick Spens*, in the best Scotch dialect the reader could muster, pleases us and we swing from it easily into *The Admiral's Ghost*. To top off this lyrical campfire we are presented with Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. The stanzas, even to us who had heard all or part of it before, dropped pleasantly on our ears. There is a long sigh at the end — the kind of a sigh that comes from being filled with something very satisfying. We can hear the wind gently pattering sand upon our tents, the roll of the surf, the voices of night insects. Yes, it is another perfect campfire to tuck away in our memories.

ONE EVENING IN THE ADIRONDACKS. A variant of this poetic treatment of the campfire occurred in an Adirondack cabin one evening in late autumn. The boys came trooping back from a crisp but uneventful bit of paddling down stillwaters in search of deer. It was a night of brilliant moonlight and correspondingly intense shadows. Heavy, jagged clouds swung rapidly



across the sky with postcard effect. With this in mind we tried Service's *The Spell of the Yukon*. We had the usual *Shooting of Dan McGrew* and the *Cremation of Sam McGee*. A kind of delicious shudder went through the group as the leader read of the greasy smoke that went streaking down the sky. We tried *The Call of the Wild*, *Grin* and *The Pines* and then from his *Ballads of a Cheechako*, *Clancy of the Mounted Police* and *The Song of the Mouth-Organ*. Before this last, we had as tone prelude a bit from a harmonica for this poem is Service's tribute to that plebeian music maker. Strong stuff with mountains and trees and wilderness, with Mounties and sourdoughs and half-breeds. But it suited our trapper's cabin this cold night. It was not first-class poetry but rather second or even third-rate and English teachers may berate me for my choice. Yet it filled a void that particular night. And there are lessons to be learned on the Yukon Trail.

A NIGHT IN THE SKY. One summer evening found us camping on the shores of Cayuga Lake in the Finger Lake district of New York State. The Scouts sprawled out comfortably on the lush grass along the beach and gazed at the stars as one by one they lighted up in the sky. As constellations began to take shape, a guessing game began. There was the H of Hercules overhead, the kite of Boötes with its tail of Arcturus, the beautiful Northern Cross, the Big and Little Bears, Draco and many others. The leader began to tell some of the Greek and Roman legends connected with the sky figures. The stars suddenly took on a new significance for the boys. Just imagine, centuries ago Greek and Roman boys heard the same stories and looked upon the same stars. Time fused and coalesced; the present and the past flowed into one. The northeast particularly held attention because of its remarkable group of legendary figures. There was Cassiopeia the mother and Cepheus the father of Andromeda who had been bound to a rock as bait for a sea monster until rescued by Perseus. We told the complete legend of Perseus from his tragic birth to his becoming king with the episode of Atlas included in our stride. As the last legend came to an end we found that the time for taps had come and gone, but one group of boys remembers more kindly the bright lights along Main Street of Heaventown.

INTO ANOTHER WORLD. We tried one of Kipling's Indian tales on a wintry eve in New York. The meeting of the Scout Troop was in a prosaic school hall but we tried to overcome this by combining a bit of red crepe paper and a flashlight with a few bark-clad pieces of wood into an artificial campfire. Then the lights were turned out and for all practical purposes — such is the magic of the campfire — we were transported to the hot wastes of the great Indian desert. Here we were flung with Morrowbie Jukes into the City of the Dead and breathlessly watched his efforts to escape from this trap. Later we discovered a corpse, found on it the clues to a path over the quicksand, met treachery from the Hindu and were finally rescued by a faithful servant. As the lights went on the boys rubbed their eyes and blinked owlshly. Sadly they seemed to come back to reality. No, it was not the burning sands of India but a wintry night in Manhattan. Yet Kipling for a few minutes raised the curtain into another world.

SUITING THE TIME AND PLACE. There were some merry nights when Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, Strap Buckner, Stormalong and other heroes of American folklore held forth. Poe's *Pit and the Pendulum* did service one blizzard-filled night in Michigan. *Prester John* by Buchan took three nights to tell. And so those memorable campfire tales will pass in review for anyone who has improved his shining hours enriching the experiences of youngsters — and his own. Poetry and prose, ballads, inspirational and narrative verse, short stories and long, all contribute to an amalgam whose wealth cannot be measured by material devices. Hours were spent, it is true, in preparing something that suited the time and place and perhaps took but twenty minutes to tell. But at the end there seemed to be a heightened rapport, a stepping-up of morale, a stimulation of *esprit de corps* that paid big dividends for the work put into it. Psychologists might find in some cases therapeutic or prophylactic effects on certain youngsters. The main purpose might well be a high type of intellectual pleasure and a quarrying out of the vast literary deposit of America and the world some of the wealth that is ours by birth and heritage.

First get the feel of the campfire, the rest will come as a natural consequence.

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## CHAPTER II

### PUTTING THE STORY ACROSS

**T**HERE IS an oft-quoted remark about a man who jumped on his horse and rode off in all directions. Just what his destination was or whether or not he arrived is still a great question. If we are to succeed in becoming a full-fledged story-teller we must have not only a purpose but also some ideas of methods for accomplishing our art. Order is the first law of both Heaven and story-telling.

**JUST FOR FUN.** In view of what has been said previously we might make our ideas jell by stating that wholesome pleasure and character enrichment are two main purposes. Some stories contribute to pure fun. Paul Bunyan, Stormalong and Pecos Bill are nothing if not sheer nonsense. These "tall tales" are not howlers. They lack both Charlie McCarthy and the wise-crack, smart gags of the radio. But once started on the telling of these classic yarns of indigenous American folklore, every youngster in your audience will become an Oliver Twist, always wanting "more." Who can resist such a story as the *Winter of the Blue Snow* when it was so cold that coffee set out to cool, froze so fast it was hot ice. Or the spring when it rained upward in Paul's lumber camp. Four feet of water collected on the bunkroom ceiling and the lumberjacks became hunch-backed walking under it. And that original cowboy — Pecos Bill. He cut his teeth on a bowie knife, played with bears and catamounts and was adopted by a coyote. That was only natural when his mother could kill forty-five Indians with a broom handle. Stormalong was the sailor. And what a ship he had! The masts were hinged to let the clouds roll by and young men who went up to reef the sails came down with gray beards. "Funny fellows" one collector of tall tales has termed them. Or Ellis Parker Butler's *Pigs Is Pigs*. And Bunner's *Zenobia's Infidelity* which suffered by its Hollywood exploitation. For

ten-year-olds Hale's *Peterkin Papers* still holds charm. Fun is entirely a legitimate aim of story-telling.

**ENRICHING CHARACTER.** Character enrichment may remind us of moral talks, Sunday school lessons and the like. That is entirely too narrow a view. On the other hand a program that leaves out some molding of this very impressionable clay in our grasp, is still-born. Scatter before boys the rarest jewels we have — stories of great deeds and great men; stories that inspire; that explore our rich American heritage; that tend to set constructive behavior patterns.

**ENRICHMENT THROUGH EXPERIENCE.** There was a brisk little story some years ago in Boy's Life magazine. The title of it was *Jimmy's Zone of Influence*. Jimmy mentioned a thought at breakfast the morning after his Troop's meeting where the Scoutmaster had planted the idea. Jimmy's father was a bit skeptical; his mother and brother — well, they would try it. And it worked in the most mysterious unexpected ways. That little story packs a big wallop and has become a classic in some troops. But let's chew on a bit of stronger meat. The third chapter of Jack London's *White Fang* tells of a trapper struggling through an Arctic winter to reach the trading post with his ghastly cargo — a coffin. Only a promise to a dead man had sent him forth into the blizzard. Slowly the wolves close in on their exhausted prey. He rings himself with fire; but a fire he cannot keep going forever. He fights grimly — asking no quarter from the terrors of the wild, and giving none. No youngster can live through this epic of heroism without having his moral fiber strengthened. His own self merges with that of the hero — he is an actor — the brands flung at the onrushing wolves are from his hands. He drives the huskies, fells the trees and defies the elements. A good story-teller can play upon the emotions of youngsters with the sure touch of a Fritz Kreisler or a Paderewski. And the results cannot be measured in this world's money.

**MEETING WORTHWHILE PEOPLE.** An introduction to the great leaders of men is another facet of our diamond. Most of the stories in use concern themselves with Robin Hood, King Arthur, St. George, Charlemagne, the Cid, Cuchulain, Rustum and other familiar characters. They hit the ten-year-old level

but would scarcely satisfy the great bulk of adolescents. We must avoid what our audience would consider "kid stuff" although the most sophisticated and blasé will often have their veneer melted off by the campfire. Some of the most touching dog stories in my memory came from fireside recitals by a group of collegiate conditioned professors' sons. Lindbergh, the Lone Eagle, gripped the imagination of youth at one time. We are still exploring the lives of Washington and Lincoln. Hollywood knew a good thing when it filmed the lives of Stanley, Pasteur, Edison and Sam Houston. Popularity and hero-worship have no correlation. There is many a hero whose deeds await recounting; heroes of adventure, of medicine, of government, of art, of peace as well as war. And the life of Christ may well lead all these heroes.

**RELIVING GREAT MOMENTS.** Whether we believe with Carlyle that men make the times or the reverse — there is an enrichment from the exploration of great moments in civilization. We do not mean Creasy's *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World* but such events as the discovery of gold in California, the invention of printing, the coming of Cortez to Mexico and of Columbus to America, the founding of Jamestown, the discovery of radium and conquest of the Poles. You will find youngsters alert to correct any slips in history. Just try having George Washington travel on the China Clipper or Benjamin Franklin telecasting in Philadelphia.

It is part of our job in educating adolescents to place them in areas of experience. What better way do we have than helping them to meet great men, to live through great moments and to participate in situations that demand a high code of action!

**A LOOK BACKSTAGE.** With these purposes clasped tight, let us venture forth on a bird's-eye and worm's-eye view of methods. To see a person stand and hold a group of red-blooded youngsters in magic thrall for twenty minutes may seem miraculous to some and dead easy to others. Richard Harding Davis commented that easy reading is "damned hard writing." Easy story-telling often means a lot of work behind the scenes. Let us go backstage for a look at the machinery.

We might say that this art is one of selection of a story, its adaptation for specific purposes and the preparation and pres-

entation of it. This is very simple when thus presented. But that is only the story — what of the teller and his audience?

**FIRST, THE STORY-TELLER.** Size, weight, pimples, fallen arches or baldness have little to do with story-telling. As soon as one begins to speak and the story gets under way, the teller might as well be the Delphic oracle clothed in vapor. His is an almost disembodied voice. Facial expressions, gestures and bodily movements do contribute to the effectiveness of the story but the voice is the focal point. It should be pleasing; and tone quality is something that can be acquired. Youngsters should like to hear you speak; not only what you say but how you say it. They note of course, any difference in pronunciation and in the deep South a Yankee would be spotted at once. This is not very important. Clear enunciation is the saving and almost indispensable factor. By speaking clearly at an easy tempo one should have no difficulty in getting youngsters to hear. The voice should be high at the start, dropping to a natural tone as the story attracts interest. A teller will gear the tempo to the action of the story and use such rhetorical devices as emphatic pauses, mimicry and striking sentences. Dialect is an individual art and luck is with you if you can imitate people or sounds. Paul Bunyan gains tremendously if a Scandinavian accent is used. A low voice by forcing attention gets better results than shouting but in the open one must use more volume. It is a good plan to ask someone on the fringe of the group if he can hear easily. This is all part of setting the right environment. The possibilities of the human voice are familiar to listeners of many radio programs of the "family" or dialogue nature.

The eyes also exert great influence. Moods in the story are reflected in the eyes — anger, fear, sorrow, joy, craftiness. Catching the eye of listeners in various parts of the audience is a favorite device although some story-tellers prefer to talk to some one sympathetic individual. The audience, however, may note this concentration of interest and react unfavorably. Rapport — the bond of understanding between the parties concerned breaks down. A sharp look in the direction of a disturbance is another use of the eyes.

If you are really enjoying yourself, and you should get as much "kick" from the situation as your audience, you will

stand relaxed. Ease as well as nervousness is contagious. Arms will hang naturally. Hands will be free to gesture spontaneously and freely. Holding any object in the hand has a tendency to distract attention from the story. The youngsters squirm and crane their assorted necks to see just what it is you are holding. If you have to use something solid, place it in your pocket or nearby but don't hold it. As you might easily guess, the entire body enters into the projection of the story — much as a baseball pitcher puts his last ounce of strength into his art.

**GETTING THE RIGHT EFFECT.** There is as much danger of over-emphasis as of under-emphasis upon methods of story-telling. Exaggerated gestures, elaborate dialect, frequent use of distracting objects and personal mannerisms will spoil what otherwise might be a corking good story. Watching yourself in a mirror go through the process of telling is a very practical stunt — you will never guess the weird way you have of doing, saying, looking until the glass proves it. There comes with practice an ease of delivery. At a certain point in preparing a story you begin to feel the pulse of it. You hear the quickening heart-throbs that must beat in every real tale. The story becomes a part of you and its ebb and flow is reflected in every act, in every motion of your body. Enthusiasm enters into your work and this carries over into the audience to produce a desirable psychological atmosphere.

If you are telling Poe's *The Pit and the Pendulum* you will invariably use simple little motions to indicate the prisoner groping in his dark cell, the deepening sweep of the fatal pendulum, the fear of the enclosing walls. The story is not complete without them. But in Kipling's *Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes*, a longer story and with more action, there is less use of gesture. It is not needed. Poe depends upon atmosphere to carry across his descriptive style of writing and we help build this by gestures. An action story swings along pretty well by itself. The one device that does help out Kipling's yarn is a slip of paper produced at the psychological moment and a pretense of reading clues from it.

One evening in camp I used a series of raps with my knuckles to add reality to a story. At one point where these mysterious raps came on the door, I gave an imitation of them and — the

door opened! The youngsters lying on their bunks and watching the log fire as they listened, were too paralyzed to dive under their blankets. There was a distinctly unpleasant moment in the hitherto well controlled mystery story, until the visitor made himself known. If you can manage such coincidences they surely add color to the tale. Creating some good black and ugly shadows on the walls helps also to create atmosphere.

Indoors a bit of lighted candle on a pie-tin on the floor and placed in front of the story-teller will produce interesting effects. The artificial campfire of crepe paper or lumps of glass simulating flames is better. But outdoors one depends upon the real thing. There is an art to both building and maintaining this campfire. It should be blazing when you start, with a boy to keep it going. The fire should not be a conflagration or so large as to force the audience to sit yards away from it. Place it so the youngsters can look into it and still see the face of the teller. In the Adirondacks a back-log fire is popular but a large boulder is equally as effective. Where the wind has full play this element must be considered.

**SECOND, YOUR AUDIENCE.** The audience deserves careful consideration. Are they boys or girls or mixed? What is their average age? Is the group of any special race or nationality or creed? How many are there? What previous stories have they heard? What are the objectives intended beyond entertainment? Where is the story to be told? And when? And how long a time does the teller have? These are some of the questions you must know about the locale of your story. There are enough stories to go around without offending the sensibilities of anyone. In a Catholic camp or group, the lives of the saints, early missionaries, great moments in Church history and religious stories form a natural core of interest. In a girl's group one chooses stories of home-life and girls' schools, famous women and romance. Boy Scouts like any good boy's story but especially those from Boy's Life, about the history of the movement, famous Scouts of today and yesterday, outdoors and woodcraft. In all of this we must remember that first and last these youngsters have a common heritage and it is our job to acquaint them with it. Jewish boys, as I observed one night, can thrill to a Bret Harte story as much as any descendant of the Mayflower.



They must know themselves as Americans. The element of age is very important. The gulf between a ten-year-old and a twelve-year-old is more than the mere two chronologic years. The same is true of twelve and fourteen, fourteen and sixteen. There is a tapering off beyond that.

**EVERYBODY COMFORTABLE.** Your listeners need to be physically at ease. It is hard to concentrate on a good story with a cold draft going down one's neck or with muscles aching from some awkward position. If seats are available they should be used. Sometimes boys will insist on sprawling on the floor or the ground — if hygienically safe — or winding themselves into shapes that would shame a contortionist. The prime requisite is that they are comfortable and be quiet. The smaller ones belong in front for all are entitled to see the face of the storyteller. Pals often want to sit together but noisy combinations must be broken up. Provide room at the outside of the ring for late comers. Those that need to leave while the story is in progress should understand the need for silence. The appeal to fair play through a brief statement before the story begins usually takes care of this. A common practice is to give the group a few minutes to cease their private conversations and settle down. Personally I am not disturbed telling stories to youngsters who are lying on their backs with feet on somebody else's stomach. It may not be according to Emily Post but if they are comfortable that is all that matters. Of course, you leave a bit of open space in front of the fire for yourself. Storytelling is not a game of statutes. When to stand and when to sit depends on the immediate set-up. I like to be where I can easily watch the faces of the group.

On a cold night outdoors, blankets are desirable or heavy jackets and sweaters. We hope there is no disturbance from the outside. Camps are usually quiet by their presumed isolation but in a city the crash of traffic sometimes makes the job of the story-teller a difficult one. Yet it takes only a press of a button to plunge a room into darkness except for the candle glow or flashlight gleam of your artificial fire. Which brings up the problem of youngsters who love to shine their flashlights at the worst times. Polite but sure confiscation of the flashlights pro tem. is a solution. Annoyances are strictly taboo and this

should be understood from the outset. A sense of campfire courtesy needs to be built.

Whatever the locale — woods, seaside, mountain or valley — use it! We have mentioned it before and will deal with it more fully later. A pamphlet of the Boy Scouts of America termed *Camp-Fire Helps* recommends such settings as twilight on a hilltop or a high rock with great distances melting into a far horizon for *The Song of Hugh Glass*; a rainy night for *Les Misérables* and a winding river for *The Song of Three Friends*. Almost every locality has some history to explore, some story about it worth telling.

THIRD, THE MATERIALS. Materials for telling — where to locate them, how to select and prepare them is a Waterloo to many leaders. Yet there is nothing mysterious about finding our nuggets in the great stream of literature. If you know your own ability and the characteristics of your group, the battle is half won. Recognizing a problem is part of its solution. Awareness of what you want sharpens the examination of everything you read and hear. There is more grist for your mill being ground about you than is at first evident.

A very effective story came from a leader's solitary walk the previous evening embellished by a person stealthily following him. A hunter's comment on a locked cabin far in the woods on an Adirondack trail furnished the core of a story-telling contest. The hunter tried to pry loose the lock for a cold rainy night was upon him and he needed shelter. A loose shutter enabled him to see the interior — and there was a gun evidently loaded, pointing at the door. What a deadly welcome for somebody! But why? You might try this on your group. A canoe trip gave a half-dozen boys a chance to be story-tellers. Each chose the day on which he had the most fun and the round-robin presented the story to their group most realistically. An item in the newspaper, a phrase over the radio, a scene in a movie, a paragraph in a magazine, a remark passed in conversation, a human interest bit of action — all of these are materials. Life itself is the best source. Yet there is much tucked away in short story collections, in anthologies of plays and poems, in novels and books of non-fiction. Printed materials and how to use them will occupy much of our attention in subsequent sections.

But the most effective stories will be carved from the social *milieu* in which we find ourselves.

**SELECT THE RIGHT STORY.** The problem, therefore, is not so much where to select materials as to how to select them. For this skillful task you must know children in general and your adolescents in particular. Anyone who has examined the considerable literature existing on children's reading interests, realizes that these studies are based on the mythical average child. And yet there is some agreement among youngsters at certain levels beyond ten as to what they like and dislike. It has been found that boys and girls like the same type of thing until about the age of ten when no real boy wants to be seen with a "girl's" book or a "kid" book. Girls are not so loath to part with childhood favorites and will also readily take outstanding boy's stories. If you cannot remember what you liked at that certain uncertain age, try out some subjects on the group — war, mystery, Indians, sports, pirates, camping, airplanes, school stories, western, animals, historical, love, weird. Terman and Lima's book *Children's Reading*, and Anne T. Eaton's *Reading with Children* are two suggestions of source materials. A recent bit of illumination comes from H. L. Mencken's *Happy Days* wherein he recounts the larval stage of a bookworm. Huck Finn heads his list — and you might even reread it to find out why it is such a classic. Do you remember the book Penrod was writing? A careful examination of the little that Tarkington has given of his hero's "Harold Ramorez the roadagent or wild life among the Rocky Mts." will stir memories of our own interests when we were his age. For after all, the story must appeal to us also.

More particularly for our purposes — especially for boys — is a section in Miller's fine contribution entitled *Story-Telling to Live Wire Boys*. Here is tabulated under each age level from nine to seventeen, a list of twenty-five choices out of a possible one hundred eleven. For instance, a ten-year-old likes stories of Indians, cowboys and aviation; a twelve-year goes in for cowboys, war and pirates; a fourteen-year wants baseball, war and aviation while the sixteen-year indicates football, aviation and war. Throughout this list we find enough common interests to satisfy a group even though it has boys of various ages. In addi-

tion to the subjects already mentioned, Miller includes jungle life, West Point and Annapolis, treasure hunts, shipwrecks, ancient heroes, humor and submarines. Boone, Crockett, Washington, Lincoln and Buffalo Bill lead the field of heroes. There seems to be no counterpart of this survey for girls but as noted previously, they use many boys' stories, Girl Scout and Camp-fire Girl books, home-life, girls' schools, love, famous women and stories with girls as central characters.

**TAKING THE STORY APART.** With a knowledge of sources and interests, what of selection? What is there in the story itself — its theme and plot and style that will make it click? If it is a serious story, the theme or underlying motive should be wholesome and constructive. It must be worthwhile. Adolescents resent having their time wasted as much as do adults. Choose a story that will stand retelling, with enough "zip" to use with other groups than the particular one of the present moment. There should be a plot that does not require an explanation of the theory of relativity. Have a well developed plan of cause and effect leading to a definite climax. True, this may be an incident instead of a series of episodes, but there must be a reason for the story. In O. Henry's *Ransom of Red Chief* you know that the little imp will make life miserable for the kidnappers. The theme of this story is obvious and the trick ending quite delightful. Youngsters are philosophers but story-telling is not another quiz game. In Davis's *The Boy Scout and Other Stories*, it is the good turn; in Blackwood's *The Willows* it is the escape from the unseen menace; in Stockton's *The Lady or the Tiger?* it is the solution of the mystery.

The style should be direct for this is not a literary exercise. Involved sentences, erudite phrases, the stream-of-consciousness style of writing has no place in our scheme of things. At the same time one wishes to retain the flavor of the writer and his story, its colorful words and phrases. A Poe story should be distinct from a Kipling or Irving or Doyle story. Some of these that depend greatly upon the author's style should be read. Poetry is the best example that comes to mind. We cannot use our own vocabulary without robbing these flowers of their nectar. Anything from Kenneth Grahame's *Wind in the Willows* should be read, or from Irving's *Legend of Sleepy*

*Hollow* and Dickens' *Christmas Carol*. We cannot easily remember such a description as that of Scrooge. "Oh! but he was a tight-fisted hand at the grind-stone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, self-contained, and solitary as an oyster." This goes on for lines and the story loses fire without it. However, much depends upon your ability to memorize and remember. As noted previously, action stories do not depend as much upon style as upon the proper sequence of events.

It is well to avoid stories dealing with sarcasm and satire, sentimental or sensational, with matters outside the child's interests or with an analysis of motive, mixed science and legend, appeals to fear or snobbery, infant piety, coarse fun, death bed scenes. The campfire is no place for the dime novel, for trash, divorce, scandal, sex, disrespect, fear, profanity or the gruesome. It is a clean, heavenly thing; let us keep it so.

MAKING THE STORY FIT. Adapting the story by adding to it, eliminating part or rearranging, is risky business. In Jacobs' *The Monkey's Paw*, nothing can be cut without loss to the effectiveness of the story. In Scholz's *Hoodoo Stone*, one of the stories in his collection of track stories called *Split Seconds*, some of the story can be omitted without loss. The adaptations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, of *Ben Hur*, *Ivanhoe* and *Lorna Doone* are familiar to those who deal with children's books. But these are long stories and may suffer from repetition or long descriptive passages. The problem of change in the plot, characters or climax of a story is not one of ethics as much as one of actual improvement. Hollywood has mutilated many of our literary classics. Unless absolutely necessary, the original in short stories is to be followed.

Sequels logically follow one another. Stockton's *The Discourager of Hesitancy* follows his *The Lady or the Tiger?* In handling such novels as Buchan's *Prester John*, one can break it into natural units; I took three consecutive nights to tell it. On the second and third nights a brief review was given of the preceding part of the story. One favorite device is the cycle arrangement, that is a series of stories as legends, tall tales, hero stories. The main thing in adaptation is to have the spirit

of the story, to "feel" it. One needs to memorize certain names of events, places or characters. Yet to forget some pet phrase should not destroy the smooth flow of the tale. Practice is the best guide here.

**PREPARING FOR THE BIG MOMENT.** Selection and adaptation are but two sides to this house we are building. What of preparation and presentation? The former has been touched on briefly — practice in front of a mirror. The story must be read, reread and this repeated until it is entirely yours. The first time you read, may be for the big idea — for its plot and theme and atmosphere. Where is the heart of the story? What is it all about? The second time you might read to see how this is effected — where does the plot direct itself? How do the wheels of the story turn? Read slowly for characters, places, climax, specialties. The third time one might read for style. What tricks of writing are employed? Are there special words and phrases that color the story? Then try telling it to yourself with and without notes and finally, retell it until the story comes smoothly. But first, there is the bird's-eye view, a visualization of the story as a whole and then a careful examination of its parts. If one made an analogy of this process to painting, it would amount to a sketching in of the general outline and next the arrangement of detail with coloring and shading to bring out all the effects desired.

If your mind registers better with graphic presentations, construct an outline with major and minor points as represented by the usual I A 1 a (1) (a). Or draw little pictures of scenes and characters. In Kipling's *Mark of the Beast* you should have a very definite picture of how this leper, this "Silver Man" actually appeared. In Doyle's famous story of *The Speckled Band* the house and its rooms need to be thoroughly understood. One practice is to jot down the important incidents in 1, 2, 3 order. Printed forms, as found in the back of this volume, can be used. You must know the characters, scenes and places, the order of the plot and the climax. In fact, the entire story must be told with the climax in mind. There are many points leading to the dénouement of *The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes* and every one must be presented at the right time and with the right emphasis.

Allow the imagination free play. See the hot Indian desert under moonlight, the wolves snarling beyond the ring of fire, the menacing specter head galloping down the midnight road. Absorb the spirit of the story. Youngsters know whether your character is alive or dead. Pick up the author's vocabulary — sahib, huskies, pieces of eight, demon eyes, Paul Bunyan's famous oath of "By the holy old mackinaw!" The process takes hours with many reviews of the story as a whole. And in spite of how well you already know it, a brief review just before telling serves as a kind of appetizer. It is your overture.

**PLUNGE IN!** We shall imagine that you are at ease in front of the group. You smile and note the youngsters settling themselves with brief instructions from you to be comfortable, no moving or talking or asking questions, a brief pause until personal conversation ends, then a hint as to what the story is about. Who, when and where must be indicated as this is part of the atmosphere and provides a foundation for the characters and their exploits. The plot but not the ending can be hinted at. Then jump into the story without apologies, pre-orations or comments on the author. Strike home with the very first sentence. "The last thing that struck his ear was the dread sentence of death." "In olden times there lived a peculiar king who had queer ideas." "Way up North in the pine woods of Canada, there lives in a cave near the sea an enormous man named Paul Bunyan." There is no stopping after such an introduction.

Make the story move with direct conversation, memorized if it is historical, with vivid definite details, with active verbs, with the emotions of the characters experienced and not merely described. If another character tells a story within a story this point should be made clear. If there is a dialogue, a turning of the head can indicate the two speakers. Timing is important — the acts and the words — the gestures and the voice synchronizing. Suspense, but not tension, must be maintained. And finally the climax positive, conclusive and done quietly. Wait for a few moments to tell the title of the story and answer any questions, then quietly withdraw. Anticlimaxes are taboo; no moralizing, no sermonizing, no summing up. If there is a point to your story, the youngsters will get it. And perhaps

there is little loss even if they don't. I remember overhearing two boys one morning talking about a story I had told the previous evening — *The Pit and the Pendulum*. "Huh," said one of them disparagingly, "it took the whole French army just to rescue one guy." That is not the point of this story but he was on hand when I started to tell another story that night.

**HABITS TO AVOID.** Mumbling, trite beginnings, toying with objects, talking down, forcing attention, over-acting, useless words, holding an audience over-long, apologies, self-praise, closed eyes, forgetfulness, bored looks, slumped shoulders, repetition, rapidity of speech, referring to notes, asking questions, over-use of the passive, side remarks, drag, unfamiliar words, too many details and low standards are some of the most glaring faults in story-telling. Common sense is the best guide to success. Nine out of ten who fail do so because of false methods or lack of preparation. If possible watch some good story-teller in action. Notice how he puts the story across. There is nothing secret to this art. Have a keen realization of what is going on in the heads of adolescents and acquire a few technical devices of speaking and reading.

**DEVELOP OTHER "TELLERS."** At several points we have spoken of story-telling by the youngsters themselves. We want to pass on any knowledge we have to others who can use it — knowledge per se is useless but the application and extension of it makes wisdom more valuable than wealth. The round-robins, retelling of things they have read, short little incidents provide ways to begin. One can start with having your group read and overcome stage-fright. Passing a magic story totem from hand to hand around the circle may overcome some hesitancy. Participation brings more real satisfaction than passive listening. Be a good story-teller yourself and encourage others to acquire this art of the ancients.





### CHAPTER III

## EXPLORING THE HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

**D**O YOU REMEMBER the conversation that Alice in Wonderland had with the Cheshire Cat? Alice had come to a junction of two roads and wondered which she ought to choose. The Cat said it depended a good deal upon where she wanted to go. Alice answered, "I don't care much where." "Then," said the Cat, "it doesn't matter which way you go." "— So long," added Alice, "as I get somewhere." Naturally we want to get somewhere and our highways and byways will be carefully marked.

**LIBRARY AHEAD!** The first sign along the highway points to the nearest library. This may be a public, school or college library. Let us hope you are already familiar with it, know the librarian and can find your way around. The majority of libraries in this country have their books arranged by the Dewey Decimal Classification system. The librarian will be glad to point out where story materials can be found but meanwhile these numbers may be of help:

- 220 Bible stories
- 232 Lives of Christ
- 292 Greek and Roman mythology
- 293 Norse mythology
- 398 Legends, sagas and folklore
- 808 General literary collections
- 810 American literature; subdivided 1 — Poetry, 2 — Drama, etc.
- 820 English literature
- 920 Collected biographies
- 921 Individual biographies
- 970.1 Indians of North America
- 973 United States history

Under the Decimal system each ten classes of knowledge are further divided into ten groups and each of these into ten and

so on like the fable of the flea. Fiction is usually grouped under "F" and arranged alphabetically by author. Also "B" and "92" are sometimes used for biography. There is really nothing difficult about using the Dewey arrangement though a good deal of material will come as the result of browsing. If the library does not have the books you want, a loan can usually be arranged from some larger collection. And there is no harm in suggesting that desirable titles be purchased.

**TREASURE HUNTING IN THE CARD CATALOG.** The library also has a cat in the form of a card *catalog*. This appears at first glance to be a case containing numerous trays of cards arranged in alphabetic order. Some of these cards have authors' names on the top line, others have titles or subjects. Each book in the library can usually be found in any of these three ways. In hunting story-material we will find something on the methods of the art under the subject heading **STORY TELLING**. Stories appear under **SHORT STORIES** or a more specialized heading as **DOG STORIES**, **SEA STORIES**, **SPORT STORIES** and others. Legends are to be found under this heading with a geographic subdivision as **LEGENDS — FRANCE**, or **CELTIC LEGENDS**, **INDIANS OF NORTH AMERICA — LEGENDS**. All biography is under the name of the individual. Historical stories sometimes have a rather elaborate heading as **U.S. — HISTORY — COLONIAL PERIOD — FICTION**. We have other headings as **FOLKLORE**, **BALLADS**, **MYTHOLOGY** and **FABLES**. In case the catalog does not divulge its secrets readily, ask the librarian. But again it is a handy library tool and not difficult to use. Another card file in a library is called the "shelf list" and here the cards are arranged in the same order as the books on the shelves. The public usually does not know about this file and in the main it is for the librarian's personal use. Permission can be obtained to examine the sections under the numbers listed above — which saves going to the shelves or the catalog. Of course the actual examination of the books is the best method of finding our treasure.

**MORE TREASURE — BOOKLISTS.** It is interesting to contemplate what would happen if all the booklists in the world were laid end to end. Would they reach around the world, to the moon or just between Detroit and Buffalo by way of the North Pole. There are lists of stories to tell and other lists of books

about story-telling and one of these usually appears in the history of every library. As indicated previously, the stories mentioned are often on the elementary level. More particularly the story-teller should know two very important lists — the *Children's Catalog* and the *Standard Catalog for High School Libraries*. The former is now in its 5th edition — 1936 and lists 4000 titles in both a dictionary and classified arrangement. In the second section you need to know the Dewey numbers but by consulting the first alphabetic section under either author, title or subject one finds the same information. While many of the books in it are too youthful for our purpose yet it reaches the 8th grade where normally we find youngsters of 12, 13 and 14. The High School Catalog is in its 3rd edition — 1937 and has 3450 titles arranged much as in the Children's Catalog. This is more pertinent to our purposes and while there is some overlapping in the junior high school group of books mentioned, the two can be used together with profit.

Another method of tracking down titles is in the *Cumulative Book Index* and its predecessor, the *United States Catalog*. Again we have the author, title, subject approach opened to us. A 1940 publication is Eloise Rue's *Subject Index to Books for Intermediate Grades*. Biographies, local history and geography, folklore, poems and plays are given special treatment. We find such sections as Dogs-Stories, Discoveries in Science, Trees-Poetry, West, Sagas, Bunyan, Paul and Francis of Assisi, Saint. This takes in the eighth grade and will be found quite usable. Hannah Logasa in her *Biography in Collections Suitable for Junior and Senior High Schools* has brought together a good deal of material for us. There is a subject index that enables one to locate the names of famous scientists, explorers and people dear to the adolescent heart. Under the names of individuals can be found complete or partial biographies. Granger's *Index to Poetry and Recitations*, 1924 with its 1934 supplement is another good tool to dig with. This has title, author and first line indexes. Finally there are such little guides as *Background Readings for American History* by Jean Carolyn Roos. Every library has collections of birthday and holiday materials, particularly volumes of Schauffler's *Our American Holiday Series*. Mary E. Hazeltine has compiled an

old — 1928 — but still valuable calendar of days and where to find material for those days in her *Anniversaries and Holidays*.

**WELCOME TO STORY TOWN.** Along the highway we may have noticed various groups busy producing grist for our mills. One of these is the National Story League, Maryville, R. D. #1, Pennsylvania. This was organized at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in the summer of 1903 by a group of teachers who would gather on the lawn at twilight and tell stories. The practice rapidly became an institution and spreading, gradually assumed the status of a nation-wide organization. The object of the League is to encourage the creation and appreciation of the good and beautiful in life and literature through the Art of Story Telling. This is done by organizing local story leagues. The latest report lists 108 leagues with thousands of members in 21 states and the District of Columbia. Its Research Department is at 42 E. Avenue, Rochester, N. Y., this being one of the many services to story-tellers by the League. In addition it publishes *Story Art*, a bi-monthly. Most of the material in the magazine is for younger children but book reviews, bibliographies and articles make it a valuable tool for all. This is 10¢ a copy or 50¢ a year. It is to our interest to publicize and promote the fine work of the National Story League.

Source material for telling comes from the American Folklore Society, 141 East 29th Street, New York City. The purpose of this group, founded in 1888, is to explore the folklore of the American Indian, the French Canadian, Spanish American, Negroes and descendants of the English settlers. Theirs is truly a cultural task and they deserve the cooperation of every story-teller in the vast work of collecting and preserving this part of our heritage. The membership of four dollars a year brings with it the highly valuable *Journal of American Folklore*, a quarterly. The *Memoirs* priced at \$3.50 each are also worth their weight in gold. They contain an abundance of regional material, as for example #2 of Louisiana folk tales, #5 Navajo legends, #10 Spanish American songs, #22 Iowa legends and #29 Iowa folk tales.

Folklore societies are to be found in many states. Oklahoma, Texas and Mississippi have strong organizations. The Folk-

Say publication of the Oklahoma Folklore Society, University of Oklahoma, Norman, is an outstanding folklore miscellany. In Pennsylvania is the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society at Allentown. The southeastern states are represented by the Southeastern Folklore Society, University of Florida, Gainesville. The Southern Folklore Quarterly is a treasure trove. It would be wise to contact both the nearest folklore society and Story League.

VISIT THE STORY-TELLER'S BOOKSHOP. Somebody has said that those who can, do; those who can't, teach; those who can't teach, supervise. This is not true of the people in story-telling and their books reflect it. Books on method are based on experience, often accompanied with stories tested by this experience. But again the younger child is the focus of attention and Miller's *Story-Telling to Live Wire Boys* is the only one specifically concerned with adolescents. Yet there is a good deal to learn about selecting, adaptation, preparation and presentation from many of the others. Marie L. Shedlock seems to be the grand old lady of American story-telling. Her *The Art of the Story-Teller* is a classic. Carolyn S. Bailey's volumes are well known — *For the Story-Teller* and *Story-Telling Hour*. C. H. Nowlin has written *Story-Teller and His Pack* while Mrs. Edna Lyman Scott contributes her *Story-Telling*. These are only a few of the many fine books. We can dig nuggets out of other books. Effie L. Power's *Library Service for Children* on page 215 and following gives the fruits of years of outstanding achievement as children's librarian of the Cleveland Public Library. The first volume, chapter three of *Guide to Literature for Character Training* by E. D. Starbuck and F. K. Shuttleworth contains good material. Manuals of various juvenile organizations and pamphlets by them as the Boy Scouts of America *Campfire Helps* already mentioned, are worth investigating. And now — *Campfire Tonight!* A story-teller is a member of a great cultural crusade and owes it to himself to know from whence it came and whither it is going. Like the Crusaders of old we need a "gleam" and the books mentioned will provide fuel for this holy fire.

THE END OF THE BROAD HIGHWAY. Where else can be found the Gold of Ophir? Are there any more lamps we can shine and

call up the wondrous Genii! What lies at the end of the highway, at the foot of the rainbow, before the blue begins? Latest material is in magazines. For our purposes there are three well-known periodical indexes — the Readers Guide to Periodical Literature, the Education Index and the International Index. Each has its own sphere of interest. The first embraces many of the common American magazines, the second those in education and the last is a mixture of American and foreign serials. They appear monthly in paper covers and cumulate into convenient periods. Within the cumulations the arrangement is alphabetic by author and subject with all the necessary bibliographic information as name of magazine, date of issue, volume and paging. The subject headings already mentioned will, in most cases, apply to these indexes. Not all articles on story-telling appear in these. Story Art is not listed, nor Scouting magazine where from time to time valuable articles appear. Cases in point are MacPeck's article in the July, 1932 issue and Stein's "Tell us a story" in the February, 1933 number. Extensive browsing among magazines will enable the story-teller to build up a file of sources for both methods and materials.

**SHORT STORY ROAD.** Byways are really more interesting than highways. The sky is bluer, the trees greener, the water crystalline and the land touched with the freshness of the first day. Like most paths, ours are inviting but none too easy to hike along. For instance, the first one is labeled "Short stories." But on every hand other paths branch off with their own sign boards — Pirate stories, Horse stories, Mystery stories. Let us try them in order.

The works of a writer usually include his short stories. When one begins to hunt for Kipling's *Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes* he finds it in the collection entitled the *Phantom Rickshaw*, also in *Indian Tales* and in a great variety of collected and selected editions of his works. I found it recently in a little 10¢ Rand McNally book of Kipling's *Stories of India*. Irving's *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* appears in his *Sketchbook*. Hawthorne's *Great Stone Face* can be found in his *The Snow Image*. And so the hunt progresses. Collections have to be carefully examined. Is Terhune's *Book of Famous Dogs* the best of his stories? Is the *Complete Sherlock Holmes* better than the

*Boy's Sherlock Holmes?* Does the Irving collection *The Bold Dragoon and Other Ghostly Tales* really present Irving? The omnibus volumes have their advantages but I still like to browse through the original collections. This also avoids the danger of adaptations, or to use a better word, mutilations. There may be something said for this practice with certain novels but it is a danger sign with short stories.

The best stories are reputedly gathered into compilations of which these are examples — Knickerbocker's *Notable Short Stories of Today*, Schweikert's *Short Stories* and Ashmun's *Modern Short Stories*. Franklin K. Mathiews, grand old man of boys literature has brought together such collections as *Boy Scouts Book of Campfire Stories* and *Boy Scout Book of Stories*. There are other specialized collections for various groups, occasions and interests. Colter has given us an *Omnibus of Romance* and an *Omnibus of Adventure*. French has edited *Great Pirate Stories*, *Great Sea Stories*, *Great Detective Stories* and the *Ghost Story Omnibus*. Lynch has also a collection of *Best Ghost Stories*. Frances E. Clarke is compiler of *Valiant Dogs* and *Cats and Cats*, dog and cat stories. Horses, birds, insects and wild animals have their innings also. The American Boy series of *Stories*, *Adventure Stories*, *Sport Stories* and *Sea Stories* is a popular group. The imagination of the compiler seems the only brake to the range of these collections. Almost any day the state of Georgia should produce "Great Boll Weevil Stories" if personal experience one summer is any criterion. But we do not have to wait for others to do our story collecting. A scrapbook may well be of more value to us than all the hack-work to date combined.

TALL STORY AVENUE. Fantastic stories grow here. We do not need to examine the tales of Baron Munchausen but our own luxuriant American folklore. Two general collections are Shay's *Here's Audacity!* and it certainly is all of that, and Miller's *Heroes, Outlaws and Funny Fellows*. These will introduce us to Paul Bunyan, Mike Fink, Tony Beaver, Strap Buckner, John Henry, Stormalong, Pecos Bill, Jim Bridger, John Buck, Finn MacCool and others. Mixed in are Johnny Appleseed, Captain Kidd, Lafitte and Lord Timothy Dexter. Sectional folklore of the tall story type appears in society pub-

lications and also in such places as these two devoted to New York State — Thompson's *Body, Boots and Britches* and Carmer's *Listen to a Lonesome Drum*. An illustration of the ramification of some themes exists in the literature concerning Paul Bunyan. The Oregon, Washington and British Columbia stories have been collected by Esther Shephard in her *Paul Bunyan*. Wisconsin appears in Alvord's *Paul Bunyan and Resinous Rhymes of the North Woods* and *Paul Bunyan, Hero of the North Woods*. There is James Stevens' *Saginaw Paul Bunyan*, Dell J. McCormick's *Paul Bunyan Swings His Axe* and *Tall Timber Tales*, Glen Rounds' *Ol' Paul, the Mighty Logger* and articles or stories appearing in magazine form as in *Story Parade* and *Folk-Say*. Of course, one cannot always tell by the title as was the comment of the Negro boy who borrowed *Black Beauty* and remarked that it wasn't what he expected it to be.

**FOLKLORE PATH.** The term "fairy tales" which to many people is synonymous with folklore may cause this path to be labeled as too juvenile for our youngsters. But strictly speaking folklore is the traditional or often oral literature of a race. There is the Nibelungenlied of the Germans, the Volsunga Saga of the Scandinavians, the Jataka tales of India and the King Arthur stories of England. These are more than fairy tales. The division between one type of folklore and another is not a sharp one. We speak of fairy tales, myths, legends, fables, epics and sagas as if they were entities but this is not so. Myths usually concern themselves with the explanation of natural phenomena and events, with the seasons, the animals and birds and trees. The North American Indian devised explanations for the Milky Way and the Great Bear, for the fluttering poplar leaves, the chipmunks' stripes, the bear's flat nose, Niagara Gorge and the Grand Canyon. The Greeks and Romans and Norse have an abundance of mythology. Legends are historical accounts of migrations, conquests and similar events. The *White Stag* by Kate Seredy embodies an old legend of how the Huns and Magyars entered Europe. Epics deal with heroes and heroines, giants and gods. Paul Bunyan is our own epic hero but in the past we have Cuchulain, the Cid, Dermot, Roland, Ulysses, King Arthur, Rustum and others. A saga is a Scandi-



navian hero story. Aesop has made fables familiar to all — short humanized animal tales pointing a moral.

There is no section of the country without its folklore, tall story or legend. The Indian has had his stories gathered into regional collections. The Zuni have been written by Cushing, the Seneca by Curtin, the Algonquin by Leland, the Sioux by McLaughlin, the Plains Indians by Gilmore, the Blackfeet by Grinnell, the Iroquois by Canfield. These are only a few and in addition to the many general collections as Parker's *Skunny Wundy and Other Indian Tales*, Brinton's *Myths of the New World*, Brown's *Echoes of the Forest* and Wood's *A Book of Tales*. Wright has exploited the Traverse Bay region of Michigan in his *The Crooked Tree*. There is Kane's *Myths and Legends of the Mackinacs and the Lake Region*, and Judson's *Myths and Legends of the Mississippi Valley and the Great Lakes*. Transliterations are available in the Publications of the American Ethnological Society. Folklore societies are adding to our store continually. And this is but a hasty glimpse of the Indian material.

We have mentioned Carmer and Thompson for New York State but we also have Gardner's *Folklore from the Schoharie Hills*. From the single county of Adams, Illinois, comes Harry M. Hyatt's work. There are a half-dozen volumes of American Negro folklore. Stoudt has written *The Folklore of the Pennsylvania Germans*. Tucked away in Donaldson's *A History of the Adirondacks* and Wilstach's *Hudson River Landings* is campfire material. Let us culturally explore for tomorrow's citizens the local scene.

There are various subject approaches. We have legends and myths connected with astronomy in Olcott's *Book of the Stars for Young People* and Williamson's *The Stars Through Magic Casements*. Vernon Quinn is developing a botanical series — *Seeds, Their Place in Life and Legends*, followed by *Roots and Leaves*. Old things take on new luster when taught by the story method. The nature program in particular can profit by the use of folklore. Again the only limitation upon the use of this material is the imagination of writer or reader.

BIOGRAPHY BOULEVARD. Here again many paths branch off. There are biographies and autobiographies, letters, journals,

memoirs ad infinitum. Some biographies are but large ones cut down. Steffens' *Boy on Horseback* is the boyhood section of his weighty Autobiography. Some are side glances as Looker's *White House Gang* which gives a boy's-eye view of the great Teddy. Occasionally we stumble on to biographies by a born story-teller as Lowell Thomas. His *Hero of Vincennes*, the life of George Rogers Clark, *Boy's Life of Colonel Lawrence* and *Count Luckner, the Sea Devil* need little adaptation for our use. Autobiographies are not necessarily more living than biographies. Clemens' & Sibley's *Uncle Dan* is better campfire material than Beard's own *Hardly a Man Is Now Alive*. Lately the trend has been to writers and musicians with the most recent attempts dealing with Robert Louis Stevenson and Stephen Foster. Here again regional use is evident.

The field of exploration — scientific, geographic or otherwise — grows a good deal of biographical and autobiographical material. Some of the most vivid pages of human courage are in Dillon Wallace's *Lure of the Labrador Wild* and the *Long Labrador Trail*. Hubbard, leader of the expedition, died while Wallace returned more dead than alive. Byrd's *Alone* has pages that set the blood stirring. Younghusband's *Everest the Challenge* and *The Epic of Mt. Everest* leave little for the imagination. The description of Mallory and Irvine climbing within six hundred feet of the peak when a blizzard struck them is something to be long remembered. When the clouds parted the tiny specks of humanity silhouetted against the Himalaya sky were no longer there. Did they live to conquer the summit? Nobody knows. Captain John Noel's *The Story of Everest*, Knowlton's *Naked Mountain*, Bates' *Five Miles High*, the story of K2 and Bechtold's *Nanga Parbat Adventure* cluster around this theme of mountain conquest.

Arctic and Antarctic are sources of appeal and great tales of heroism. Maclean and Fraser in their *Heroes of the Farthest North and Farthest South* give an overview of the main adventures. Many explorers have written their own accounts, such as Byrd's book previously mentioned, Shackleton's *Arctic Journey and South*, the accounts of Peary, Nansen, Scott, Amundsen and others. Hall's *Nansen* is a beautiful book in more ways than one. Ellsberg in his *Hell on Ice* has given a glimpse of the

tragic saga of the Jeanette under Captain deJong. Stefansson's *Unsolved Mysteries of the Arctic* has high voltage campfire material in its account of the lost Franklin expedition, the death of Andrée and other subjects. A dozen individuals can be met in Key's *The Story of 20th Century Exploration*. Nor should the discoveries and explorations of previous centuries go unsung.

For boys we have the lives of Boone, Will James, Lindbergh, Père Marquette, Davy Crockett, Grenfell, Martin Johnson, Wright brothers, Edison, Lee, Lincoln, Washington and Will Rogers in addition to those already mentioned. Girls will be interested in Jane Addams, Helen Keller, Florence Nightingale, Amelia Earhart, Joan of Arc, Madame Curie and Louisa Alcott. There are biographies of authors and inventors, saints and athletes, presidents and naturalists, discoverers and foreign born, kings and queens, men of danger and artists, musicians and poor boys, famous mothers and aviators. Recency is an element to be considered and I see no reason why Wrong-Way Corrigan might not be a filler-in at some campfire. The main importance of biography is the inspirational contribution to youngsters' lives. Youth worships his heroes — let us give him those worthy of this worship.

**HISTORY HIGHWAY.** Biography and history are complementary. Men and their environment are changing and being changed. If one read Julia Davis' *No Other White Man* or Moorehead's *New World Builders* — both of these books dealing with the Lewis & Clark expedition, it would be difficult to say where biography leaves off and history begins. The *Jesuit Relations* are both biography and history. Hero tales and collections as *Redskins and Pioneers*; brave tales of the Great Northwest by Barry and Barr are examples of this intermingling.

However, material treated from an historical viewpoint can be interesting in itself. Last summer a group of Scouts camped within the old fort on Mackinac Island for a week. For two nights at campfire we read the story in round-robin fashion of the Straits, ending with the massacre at Fort Michilimackinac. It would have been improved with a dash of Kenneth Roberts' *Northwest Passage* or Kane's book already mentioned.

The WPA Federal Writers Project in its American Guide Series is bringing a good deal of fine, little known history to light. It had entirely escaped me while over in the Berkshires that Captain Kidd had planted gold in the Harbour at Cheshire. The revelation has not started another gold rush but might easily be a real treasure for story-tellers in camps in that region.

POETRY LANE. The same argument might be advanced with poetry as with short stories that collections of a poet's work are the best sources of material. However it is more difficult to dig out campfire poetry than it is a short story. A single collection may have poems dealing with stars, snow, hired men, fences, death, ducks and cabbages in the moonlight. The poet's mind seems to range further afield than the prose writer's. A good anthology is a godsend and fortunately we have a number of them as Davis' *Girl's Book of Verse*, Fish's *Boy's Book of Verse*, Untermeyer's *This Singing World* and many others. There is humor in Daly's *Little Book of American Humorous Verse* and Guiterman's *Gaily the Troubadour*. The outdoors makes fragrant the pages of Goldmark & Hopkins' *Gypsy Trail* or Grover's *Nature Lover's Knapsack*. Ballads are found in a number of collections of which Quiller-Couch's *Oxford Book of Ballads* and Olcott's *Story-Telling Ballads* are well known. The dialect of many of these ballads can add or detract from their presentation, depending upon the ability of the reader or reciter. Also care must be taken not to offend anyone. The Italian dialect poems in Daly's collection may not seem funny to a youngster of that nationality. Such books as Smith's *A Book of Shanties* (chanties) can prove very useful. This particular one contains "Stormalong." Inexpensive individual copies of some poems as Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* can be purchased. Also the longer the poem the less likely is it to be found in anthologies. Service is evidently considered beneath their dignity. A bit of preparation may be necessary to create the artistic response. On one camping trip we started the custom the very first evening of watching the sun set in all its magnificence over the lake. Poetry suited to the time, place and characters was enthusiastically received. Youngsters probably get just as tired of the *Idylls of the King*

and *Lays of Ancient Rome* as do the teachers. As a last resort we might use Dan Beard's trick by grunting and thumping our chest and telling our audience that we are giving *Hiawatha* in Ojibwa.

NOVEL KNOLL. The path climbs a bit here as this is a larger subject than short stories, poems or biographical sketches. It is of no more importance however. As a rule novels are not considered story-telling materials — any more than are newspapers. Many of them are character studies with the theme, a change in the personality, under consideration. Sometimes such a story will stand reading aloud to a group. The *Kid From Tompkinsville* by Tunis is one of these, or Chute's *Shattuck Cadet* but it would be difficult to tell either of these and make any kind of an artistic job of the telling. Some novels resist any attempt to lift out the shining jewels in their matrix. Where a story is a string of incidents, each rather complete by itself, the task is easier. Owen Johnson's Lawrenceville stories — *Varmint*, *Tennessee Shad* and *Prodigious Hickey* can easily be taken apart. Action and adventure are the best characteristics of a story for telling. *Prester John* has already been used to illustrate this point.

Interest is not a sufficient criterion. At one camp the boys insisted on having a chapter of Jimmie Dale read to them at each campfire. It was thrilling but these stories of the underworld were scarcely uplifting and to me seemed a sacrilegious use of the occasion. The effect of books can be illustrated by a remark of Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton when at a banquet he pointed his finger at Dan Beard and said, "There is the man who sent me in search of the South Pole. It was his books and his writings that taught me the love of stirring adventure and filled me with a desire for achievement." This might be taken as our text when we consider novels for telling or reading to our youngsters.

DETOURS. There are many other bypaths such as hobbies and original stories but the main paths have been examined during the past few pages. There is a short pause for that second wind and to pack our story-teller's knapsack for another hike down rich trails. On each of them we will build our fire, tell our stories and sing our songs.

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## CHAPTER IV

### SHORT STORIES TO TELL

THE COMMONEST MATERIALS for campfire story-telling are short stories. They are almost as varied as Red Chief's conversation which, as you may remember, included stars, girls, eggs, toads, oranges, gravy, caves, rats, birthdays, puppies, beds, why Hank had a red nose and Amos Murray had six toes. This very abundance is not an unmixed blessing. The problem of securing worthwhile short stories that measure up to the standards stated in Chapter Two is a man-sized one.

BRRR! GHOSTS! Ghost stories are invariably on the list of demands. One youngster told me that he waited for "Skipper" to tell him a ghost story all summer. Alas, the leader left camp the afternoon of the eventful campfire. I have often wondered just what Skipper would have told, for these stories ranged from the innocuous to the ultra-horrific. Certainly the campfire is not designed to foster fears, foolish superstitions or to shock the nervous system. Adolescents are quite as susceptible as little children to nightmarish tales. This fact was impressed upon me when I selected a moonlight night in a wooded spot to tell Jacobs' *The Monkey's Paw*. The audience — a Troop of Scouts — was sitting on a slope overlooking an expanse of trees, darkened glades and sky, an excellent backdrop for such a tale. The monkey's paw was a tightly wrapped eagle's claw that I happened to possess. The story itself concerns three wishes that may be made by the one having the paw — but each wish destined to bring evil regardless of how innocent it may seem. The first wish results in death, the second brings the corpse back from the grave and the third returns it in a hair-raising climax. In spite of the description given, the story is not particularly gruesome — the Hollywood productions of *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* and *King Kong* have it backed off the boards. But it did frighten those boys and

one tenderfoot who lived down a long stretch of dark road would not walk home. As an anti-climax to the story, I had to escort young Bob part way and assure him that the thing was all imagination. That to me is the crux of this ghost story problem — to avoid planting supernatural ideas in the already phobia crammed heads of some youngsters. As a general rule it might be best not to tell these stories to any but mature boys and girls. Recently a rather weird tale of a one-arm Hindu was told to a group of camp leaders and accepted as a fine bit of entertainment. Here was the proper setting and response. *What Was It?* by Fitz-James O'Brien, Wells' *The Ghost of Fear*, Blackwood's *The Willows*, Quiller-Couch's *The Roll-Call of the Reef*, Irving's *Rip Van Winkle*, Austin's *Peter Rugg, the Missing Man*, Kipling's *Mark of the Beast* and Bulwer-Lytton's *The House and the Brain* all deal with psychic and supernatural phenomena. But they are not filled with bloody hands, screams, vampires and the movie paraphernalia of a thriller. Because of the immediate response to ghost stories, the beginner often falls for the lure of their ready interest. It is more to our credit if we mine real gold instead of something that has a deceiving glitter. Collections include Lynch's *Best Ghost Stories*, French's *The Ghost Story Omnibus* and the *Boy Scouts Yearbook of Ghost and Mystery Stories*.

PAGING HAWKSHAW. With no disrespect meant to Pliny who seems to have written the first ghost story or to the productions of Scott, Poe, de Maupassant, Hawthorne, R. A. Cram and a dozen others, we can more profitably spend our time with detective tales. This is defined here as a story in which a sleuth by deduction and detection solves a mystery — a story in which crime is not the theme. Few mystery stories exist without murder or death even where Father Brown is concerned. But in a detective yarn some individual such as the immortal Sherlock Holmes, Craig Kennedy, Bulldog Drummond, Charlie Chan, Barney Cook or Dr. Priestley is the mainspring. A higher response is required from the group because an intellectual and not an emotional experience is involved. For instance in Futrelle's *The Problem of Cell 13*, the "Thinking Machine" by his clever wit makes good a boast to break out of the strongest prison within a week. Dr. Priestley solves the mystery of

*The Vanishing Diamond* by deduction — the favorite method used by Doyle in his Sherlock Holmes stories. An excellent example of the results of close observation is given in Doyle's *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*. Here a fixed bed, a false bell rope, useless ventilator, iron safe, milk and knotted leash led to the solution of a murder that involved a poisonous snake. To most adolescents it is exactly this remarkable display of wits that provides the appeal.

A further development involves the use of instruments. Craig Kennedy uses a dictograph in solving *The Black Hand* and Luther Trant a pneumograph in *The Man Higher Up*. While the FBI has acquainted us with the scientific school of detection, we should not be concerned over the accuracy of methods used in these stories any more than we should try to imitate Wells' *Time Machine*. Chesterton openly warns us of the truth of the archaeology and history used by him. Youngsters may not understand the archaeological references in his *The Curse of the Golden Cross* and still be thrilled with it. The only mystery story in my memory which gives the solution first is that of *The Gold Bug* by Poe. Here is an ideal story for a chalk talk although this is not necessary for a complete understanding of the cipher. Something resembling "a scrap of dirty foolscap" is essential and this marked with a death's head, goat and the code. The first few pages can be omitted and the story start with the visit to Legrand. A diagram should be used in Collins' *A Terribly Strange Bed*.

THE APPEAL OF THE UNUSUAL. These stories border on a large and relatively undefined group, unless one calls them "unusual." Wells' *The Star* describes the scorching visit of a blazing celestial visitor; Poe's *The Pit and the Pendulum* concerns the torture of a prisoner by the Inquisition of Toledo; his *Descent into a Maelström* is that of a vessel sucked into a whirlpool; Stockton's *The Lady or the Tiger?* with its sequel *The Discourager of Hesitancy* tells the story of a king's peculiar sense of justice; Kipling's *Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes* of the Hindu Village of the Dead. These are but few of many. While ghost, mystery and detective stories form a wide area for selection, we cannot ignore the ubiquitous crime tale. We encounter them in many collections and the news-



stands and motion pictures scream with lurid titles. One of the factors leading to this little book on story-telling was the reading of Jimmie Dale stories at a camp where I was counselor. With such vast resources of fine stories at our command, we should not betray our trust by using the gruesome, the horrible and the criminal.

MORROWBIE JUKES! *The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes* is an ideal story of the unusual. Briefly, Jukes is a Civil Engineer stationed in the Great Indian Desert. On a moonlight night when the camp dogs are howling, Jukes's fever gets the better of him. He tries to shoot the beasts, then mounts his horse to ride them down with a boar-spear. The horse proceeds to run away. Out over the silver sands they speed. The ground rises suddenly and when Jukes awakes he finds himself in a steeply sided amphitheater. Around the crater and near the floor level are a series of stinking holes — but no sign of life. He tries to ride his horse up the banks only to be choked by torrents of sand. Next he turns to the river flowing across the open end of the horseshoe. Rifle fire from a boat anchored midstream drives him back. The shots, however, bring out from their holes a crew of scarecrows, one of whom recognizes him. Jukes sees in this ragged skeleton a former prosperous Brahmin and government agent — Gunga Dass. From him he finds that he is in the Hindu Village of the Dead and there is no escape. Food is occasionally left but crows form the main item of consumption. Dass bargains with Jukes to catch crows for him in return for his money. That night when the boat has gone, Jukes tries to follow the shore but nearly dies in the quicksand. He returns to find his horse has been torn apart by the hungry wretches. Dass tells him that he will die like the other "Feringhi" and Jukes forces the Hindu to reveal the corpse of an Englishman. The clothes contain a pipe, keys and other items but nothing revealing; in a notebook is a stained and discolored slip of paper containing some cryptic notes. Dass, under threats, admits he killed the Englishman to find this paper which describes a path over the quicksand to freedom. That night Jukes is struck down by Dass and on recovering finds the Hindu has disappeared with the clue. However, a noise attracts him to the bottom of the crater; a rope

slides down towards him and he is pulled to the top by a servant who has tracked the horse across the desert.

Here is a story of action, of cause and effect. The fever leads to the runaway, this to the fall into the Village of the Dead, this to efforts to escape. The shots bring forth the inhabitants, one of them is Gunga Dass who reveals the corpse which contains the clue. A nice balance must be maintained between Jukes's failure to escape — by all possible methods — and hints that there is a way out. The presence of the boat points to this, Dass's desire for money and boots, the precious slip of paper. The sequence of events must be carefully maintained, one hinging upon the other. There is a chronological order to be remembered for the story covers two days and three nights. The first night Jukes falls into the crater after a wild ride over the sands. That day he tries to escape by wall and river, learns of his predicament and to eat crow. The second night is the almost fatal effort over the quicksand and the death of his horse. The following day he discovers the body and the clue and with Dass plans to escape. On the third night he is struck down only to be rescued by his servant. Finally, there is a geographic sequence centering about the amphitheater. The moonlit desert sets the general scene and the audience should "feel" the desolation of the Great Indian Desert. The "Village of the Dead" is the main scene. We know it first as a horseshoe-shaped crater of sand opening on one side directly on the river. Next we see the steep walls, then the size of the enclosure with a well in the center. Round the bottom of the crater are the holes which we examine in detail. The scene should be as vivid as a stage setting. The inhabitants, Gunga Dass and the corpse must also be realistically portrayed even to the six items found in the Englishman's hunting-suit. The method of capturing crows adds to the realism.

Colorful words need to be retained although the conversation is not memorized; Brahmin, Hindu, rupee and anna, sahib, bakshish, sand poppies, fakir, Vishnu and punkah. There is a story within the story as told by Gunga Dass in explaining the meaning of this Village of the Dead. In order not to confuse the two this minor tale is best presented in a different tone. My own method is to characterize Dass by a high,

whining voice and Jukes by a sharp, deep voice, using the normal tone for all other parts of the story. Otherwise the general suggestions for story-telling given in Chapter Two apply. It is well to have a stained slip of paper with the clues written out exactly as given in the story. Certain phrases will cling to one's memory: "the waters of the Sutlej shining like a silver bar below," "a withered skeleton, turbanless and almost naked, with long matted hair and deep-set codfish-eyes."

**THE FOLLOW-UP STORY.** This story serves a dual purpose. It is a fine piece in itself and leaves something for the youngsters' imaginations. Often the question is asked — "What happened to the Hindu — to Gunga Dass?" Kipling does not tell us. Did he escape? Was he trapped in the quicksand? My response has been to invite solutions. "What do you think?" I ask. Youngsters who never thought of telling a story find themselves spinning a yarn. Perhaps the explanation is this:

"After the Hindu had attacked Jukes, he took the paper and got out of the Village of the Dead. He said to the people, 'Ha! you dogs down there, why don't you come out!' All of a sudden he slipped and the paper dropped out of his hands. He fell back into the hole. The people attacked the Hindu and took the paper. When the Hindu woke up he found that he was left alone to die in the Village of the Dead."

Another solution I copied down was this:

"The Hindu laughed harshly as he looked down upon the inert body of the Sahib. He picked up the paper and carefully followed the instructions. Sure enough, after he dug in the sand a little while he came to a chest. He opened the cover and there was no bottom but there was a flight of stairs. He followed them and soon came out into the brilliant moonlight. He went to the brink of the bank and laughed loud and long at the people down below. All the people looked up at him and wondered how he managed to get up the bank. Suddenly he slipped and fell screaming down the bank. He lost the paper and never found it again. He died down there."

It will be seen that this story-teller used his license to elaborate — adding a chest to the stage property. The quicksand is used by some to finish the tale as in:

"After the Hindu hit Jukes on the head he took the gun

barrel and paper. He went and started measuring. While doing this he slipped and fell in the quicksand. He started sinking slowly. Then he started to struggle. It didn't do him any good for he sank faster. He wanted to yell but he was in up to his mouth. That is what happened to the Hindu for his wickedness."

In still another story in my notes the Hindu returns for something to eat and is knifed by the Sahib. The children who told these stories were eleven and twelve years of age and better results can be obtained from older boys and girls. In fact, I believe that they enjoyed their stories more than the original — what more needs be said!

Completing this brief over-view of the "unusual," several collections might be mentioned. Haycraft has edited *The Boy's Book of Great Detective Stories* and followed it with *The Boy's Second Book of Great Detective Stories*. The latter volume covers the dates of 1912-1940. French has compiled *Great Detective Stories*; Colter's *Omnibus of Adventure* has several good tales of this type and we should not forget the general collections of Ashmun, Knickerbocker, Schweikert and others, nor individual collections as Irving's *The Bold Dragoon and Other Ghostly Tales*, his *Bracebridge Hall*, *Tales of a Traveller* and *Sketchbook*, Poe's *Prose Tales*, Doyle's various collections of Sherlock Holmes stories and Kipling's *Indian Tales*, *The Phantom Rickshaw* and *Under the Deodars*. Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales* might be mentioned here because his *Ambitious Guest* and *The Great Carbuncle* are both odd stories. The former has the famous Willey Slide in Crawford Notch, New Hampshire, as its tragic theme; the latter a legendary jewel atop the Crystal Hills or White Mountains sought for by a motley and symbolic crew.

DOWN TO THE SEA IN STORIES. Stories about pirates appeal to adolescents. The remarks made about crime fit these tales and unless local interest makes their telling almost imperative, they might well be omitted. If a youngster wants to read the works of Pyle, Verrill, Stockton and others that deal with buccaneers, pieces of eight and walking the plank, we cannot prevent him. The sea offers better material than the Jolly Roger, rapine and slaughter. In Chapter Five we will make a few

suggestions and then consign it to Davy Jones's locker. If we examine the *American Boy Sea Stories* collection, we find Lindbergh's flight over the Atlantic, whaling, wrecks, diving, fishing, the U. S. Naval Academy, war, mystery and tall tales — certainly, enough scope for any story-teller. There is a statement worth repeating in the Foreword to this volume: "We have held to the belief that the boy should have just as good fiction — as gripping and convincing action, as truthful a portrayal of character, and as authentic atmosphere — as his older brother, or his father." The collection well exemplifies this. French also has a compilation of *Great Sea Stories*.

**ZOOLOGICAL LITERATURE.** The dispute that arose some years ago and still continues as to just what should constitute the fiction of natural history needs not concern us here. We do not want youngsters to think that trees are pink and bears are covered with polka dots. Adolescents are beyond the talking-animal stage. At the same time they are keenly interested in the out-of-doors. Charles G. D. Roberts in his *The Watchers of the Trails* considers his stories fiction yet true and factual, each story consistent with truth. Animals do not have human motives and mental processes but their actions spring from impulses which can be determined by observation. The melodramatic, visionary and sentimental are thereby excluded. His stories are an interpretation of the wilderness — a wilderness filled with muskrats, partridges, deer, bears, rabbits, foxes, weasels, lynxes, otters, raccoons, mice and wolves; shadowed by hawks, eagles, wild geese, kingbirds, owls and the many small birds. Trout figure in his *The Master of Golden Pool* and dragonflies in *The Little Wolf of the Air*. Many of the stories are better read than told but two are replete with action and deserve the best efforts of the story-teller, *The Rivals of Ringwaak* — the fight between a lynx and wildcat, and *The Truce* in which a bear and a man forget their hostility while marooned on a small island in a raging river. *Secret Trails*, *Hoof and Claw*, *Wisdom of the Wilderness* and *They Who Walk in the Wilds* are other collections. Archibald Rutledge has written *Plantation Game Trails* and *Children of Swamp and Wood* among other books dealing with fauna in the South. Samuel Scoville's *Wild Folk*, *More Wild Folk*, *Runaway Days* and *Wild Honey*

contain some of his excellent nature stories. A more familiar name is that of Ernest Thompson Seton. We may not agree with his thesis that the life of a wild animal always has a tragic end. Not all of his own stories bear this out. His *The Trail of the Sandhill Stag* ends happily, nor does death or tragedy end the *Biography of a Silver Fox*. However of the eight stories in *Wild Animals I Have Known*, six end in tragedy. I would not recommend a steady diet of his stories in spite of excellence. *Silverspot, the Story of a Crow* offers a chance to show what you can do with crow calls. Certainly any adolescent who has listened to these tales will understand much better the lives of crows, partridge, wolves, foxes, rabbits and mustangs. Two dog stories are included in the group but both are tragic. Terhune's *Book of Famous Dogs* and Clarke's *Valiant Dogs* offer more acceptable material. *The Good Dog Book* is another worthwhile collection. There is also the *Boy Scouts Yearbook about Dogs* and the *Boy Scouts Yearbook of Wild Animal Stories*. St. Nicholas magazine has issued *Our Dog Friends*. Cats have their inning in Clarke's *Cats and Cats*. From time to time other animals are honored as wolves and elephants. Finally, we should remember man's friend the horse as presented to us in Clarke's *Gallant Horses*. Natural history non-fiction is listed in Chapter Ten.

SPORTS. The *American Boy Sport Stories* and the *Boy Scouts Yearbook of Sport Stories* are representative of this interest. It would be better yet if each sport had such a fine collection as Scholz's *Split Seconds; Tales of the Cinder Track*. The extremes of sportsmanship are cleverly handled in *The Winning Bug* and *Medium Boiled*. I have told *The Hoodoo Stone* — a story of an athlete whose main problem is to conquer his own superstition — to boys who knew little of track. Fair play and clean sportsmanship are of universal appeal — the type of sport matters little. It would be preferable to tell football stories in the fall and baseball stories in the spring to meet seasonal interests.

STORIES TO INSPIRE. Patriotism is another facet of our diamond. The bulk of the material lies more in fact than fancy but Becker's *Golden Tales of Our America*, *Golden Tales of New England* and other sectional collections and the *Boy*

*Scouts Yearbook of Patriotism and Pioneers* have enough to start us off. We enter here upon a consideration of inspirational stories. *King Solomon of Kentucky* is more than a story of Lexington caught in the plague. An old darky whom everyone regarded as a roustabout rises to heroic heights in the crisis as an example of the divine spark in even the humblest of clay. Bret Harte's *How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar* is another saga of the greatest in the least. Dick Bullen braved flooded streams and highwaymen to bring a few toys to Johnny and the Christmas spirit to Simpson's Bar. Davis's *Boy Scout* did more good turns than he reckoned when the Good Samaritan met him. Jimmie Reeder reminds us of another boy in Walter MacPeck's *Jimmy's Zone of Influence*. His Scoutmaster had told him that each person has a "zone of influence" — a room, a block, a city, a country or even the world. Jimmy talked about it at breakfast and a very skeptical family decided to give it a trial. The idea worked in ways least expected. *The Man without a Country* — the tragic story of Philip Nolan — might well be mentioned; and Hawthorne's *The Great Stone Face* which reflected not financial, military or political power but rather the rugged character of Ernest. Lincoln stories seem to be a compound of the true, the good and the beautiful. Andrews' *The Perfect Tribute* and *The Counsel Assigned* are familiar to us but we may overlook *The Toy Shop*. The tall man often stopped in Joseph Schotz's store to buy toys for his little boy. One day he bought a plain little general who stood firmly while the mounted general tumbled about. Joseph said the plain soldier reminded him of Napoleon but to the tall man it meant the selection of Grant and the end of the Civil War. On a later day the tall man stopped by to thank Joseph for the little general. Then the toy maker recognized him — Abraham Lincoln. Naturally we look to the Bible as the alpha and omega of character training and inspiration. In Chapter Ten we will touch on the life of Christ. From the Old Testament we can draw the story of Joseph, of Ruth, of David and Goliath, of Sampson and Delilah, of Moses who led his people through desert and wilderness. Of a semi-religious nature is Dickens' *Christmas Carol* — a story better told than read.

VARIETY! By this time you must be convinced of the wide range of available material. There are collections of aviation stories, of prairie, hunting, radio, adventure, true adventure, good turn, desert island, romance, Indian and just plain good stories. Humor is at a premium. There is the *Boy Scouts Yearbook of Fun in Fiction* but most of the stories are scattered. O. Henry's *Ransom of Red Chief* is familiar and Hollywood boosted as well as mutilated Bunner's *Zenobia's Infidelity* — the story of a lady elephant who falls in love, not with another elephant but with the home-town doctor. Cobb's *Fiddle D.D.* may strike some Scout leaders as a bit sharp-edged but there is a lot of fun in it. Novels, however, prove a richer vein of humor.

TO THE LADIES. Some pages back we mentioned the American Boy's criterion of literature — the various Boy Scout collections are equally high grade. No slight was intended towards the *Girl Scout Short Stories* taken from the American Girl magazine. One introductory statement is especially revealing. "The girl of today wants in her fiction what she wants for herself in her everyday living — action, frankness, variety of interest, truth, courage, understanding. Real adventure, plausible mystery, girls and their companions who are courageous in facing their daily problems, girls who achieve — these appeal to her and these should be her reading." In this collection are stories of mystery, adventure, animals, history, legend, girls and Girl Scouts. They are not namby-pamby stories but pack a real punch. *Leonora and the Wolves*, *A Battle with an Alligator* or *On the Apache Trail* may sound more like a boy's than a girl's choice unless we remember that the girls of today and the Girl Scouts especially are real people doing real things in a very real world.

THE RIGHT STORY. The time, place and characters condition the use of the stories mentioned. Some are more suited to girls than boys, to sea than mountain, to East than West, to summer than winter, to younger than older adolescents. In New Hampshire we would be interested in *The Great Stone Face*, *The Ambitious Guest* and *The Great Carbuncle*; in New Mexico *Lobo*, *King of Currumpaw* and *The Pacing Mustang* once lived; in California Dick Bullen made his epic ride;



near Boston eternally drives Peter Rugg; in the Catskills Rip Van Winkle awakes only to sleep again; in the South the animals and birds of Scoville and Rutledge still haunt field and forest; Kentucky should remember King Solomon and Washington its toy shop. Again the story-teller can make a cultural contribution to American life by bringing to American youth the regional and national wealth so abundant about us.

Having shot our bolt into the blue, let us pull our bow for the next target — long stories.

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## CHAPTER V

### USING THE LONG STORY

A LONG STORY is not a short story that like Topsy "just grow'd." As a rule the former type concerns itself with the development of a character and the latter with an incident or episode. In long stories we meet those characters that make our literature famous — Tom Brown and Jim Hawkins, Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, Penrod, Ben-Hur, Ivanhoe, Captain Ahab, Sydney Carton, Fletcher Christian, Leatherstocking, Captain Nemo and dozens of others. These are friends of generations of boys and girls and deserve a place at our campfires.

THE MAGIC OF PRESTER JOHN. The length of the long story probably acts as a deterrent to its use. The edition at hand of *Moby Dick* consists of 540 pages and that of *Lorna Doone* of 811 pages. Even if these were worth telling or reading, a considerable number of sessions would have to be devoted to them. The problem of sustaining interest from evening to evening in a story is a difficult one. The long story, therefore, by having a strong central character offers continuity to the telling but requires also a high saturation point of interest. Buchan's *Prester John* is an excellent illustration of what can be done with the right kind of novel. David Crawford encounters a strange Negro missionary in his native Scotland and later in Africa knows him as the heir to the legendary kingdom of Prester John. The Kaffirs and other tribes are stirred to rebellion in the hope of restoring the kingdom. Hoping to prevent the catastrophe, David tracks the Negro leader to the secret meeting place, later seizes the magic collar of John and eventually brings death to the leader and fortune to himself. It is a story of high adventure with never a dull moment. The ceremonial in the Cave of Rooirand of the Keeper of the Snake, the escape at the fight of Letaba, the death of Laputa, the visit of Arcoll of the secret service, the trial

in Inanda's Kraal are a few high points. We divided the story, like ancient Gaul, into three parts. On the first night we followed David from his sight of the Rev. John Laputa dancing on the Kirkcable shore to the rendezvous of the plotters in his store at Umvelos. We met the treacherous Henriques, the drunken storekeeper, learned of the illegal diamond traffic, heard Arcoll's tale of the rising with the drums throbbing in our ears, learned the place and password of the conspirators and rode north to destiny.

On the second night, after a brief résumé by one of the youngsters, we hid in the cave where Laputa became heir to the power and ruby collar of Prester John amid barbaric splendor and ceremony. Discovered at last, we were carried captive with the Kaffir army towards the round-up at Inanda's Kraal. With the aid of a spy we escaped in a battle at the Drift of Letaba with the Collar of John in our possession. This we hid before capture the next morning in the Berg. Back in the Kraal we bargained the jewel talisman against our life and secured Laputa's promise of freedom. The third night found interest at the boiling point. David disclosed the hiding place only to find himself attacked by Laputa. Seizing the leader's horse he spurs away to meet a British patrol and start the man-hunt by Arcoll's troops. David in turn follows Laputa back to the Cave of Rooirand where the heir to John leaps to his death after breaking down the path to escape in a bloody struggle. David in desperation climbs the crags to live and to enjoy the treasure he subsequently took from the cave.

The entire story consumed approximately an hour — twenty minutes each night. And these were consecutive evenings to prevent any interruption in the flow of the story. It is evident that holding over an installment beyond one session tends to destroy the bond of interest. This type of story-telling lends itself more to long-term than short-term camping. As a result of this story the campers began a series of their own devoted to the rather weird doings of the "Neon Mummy." This interesting gentleman lasted for four nights when an ultra-violet ray gun exploded his nebulous form for all time.

**HITTING THE HIGH SPOTS.** It seems to me that some novels can be made much more interesting by the telling. Cooper's

*The Last of the Mohicans* dealing as it does with the massacre at Fort William Henry in 1757 is such a book. The long descriptions and wooden conversation can be scaled down and attention devoted to the stirring episodes of the plot. The fight on the island in the Hudson, the massacre at the Fort, the escape from the Indian village and battle between the Hurons and Delawares are memorable deeds. Uncas, Chingachgook, Hawkeye and Duncan are inspiring figures. *Moby Dick*, an encyclopedia of whaling information bogs down in its morass of data. Incidental tales are interlarded with the factual material. However the chase of the White Whale by Captain Ahab in the Pequod with its symbolic and variegated crew can be pieced together into an exciting tale. The last three days of the chase are the most exciting in the story and might well be read, using possibly three campfire periods on the plan of Prester John. No youngster who has ever seen a ship will forget the sinking Pequod with a hawk fluttering vainly in the streaming flag on its mainmast as it sails to Davy Jones's locker. The trilogy of Nordhoff and Hall centering about the *Mutiny on the Bounty* is another fine story that will stand telling. The trial of the mutineers, especially that of Roger Byam, occupies a prominent part of the first book but in the telling the life aboard the *Bounty* would prove more interesting. *Ivanhoe* has many stirring pages that we can use. The story might well begin with the tournament at Ashby in which are introduced Ivanhoe, Richard Cœur de Lion, Cedric, Robin Hood, Prince John, Isaac of York, Rebecca, Rowena and the false knights. The battle at Front de Bœuf's castle needs but little of the story-teller's imagination to make it live again, or the trial of Rebecca before the assembly of Templars. Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities* concerns a more recent period of the French Revolution. No finer example of self-sacrifice is found in literature than that of Sydney Carton who in one heroic act under the guillotine redeemed a misspent life. That scene with the trial of Evremonde and the story of Defarge's wine-shop should be part of the cultural heritage of every adolescent.

It will be seen that some books have a continuity which allows all or much of their plot to be used. The Crunchers can easily and preferably be omitted from the *Tale of Two Cities*, the

zoological data from *Moby Dick*, long descriptions and meandering conversation which often make books tedious to youngsters. Novels are not so sacrosanct that certain scenes cannot be lifted out as, for instance, in *Tom Brown's School-Days* where the fight between Williams and Tom will symbolize fair play for all time. In *Lorna Doone* it might be the attack led by John Ridd upon Doone Valley. In *Westward Ho!* the fight between the Rose under Amyas Leigh and three Spanish ships might be chosen; in *Hard Cash* the incident in which the merchantman Agra destroys the pirates in the Malay Islands or the rescue from the Cecilia in *The Wreck of the Grosvenor*. In case this is too nautical, you might try the story of the runaways in Walpole's *Jeremy and Hamlet* — possibly some of the audience may have learned the lesson of Raikes and Stokesley Maj. Tom Sawyer and his companion Huckleberry Finn furnish many a tale, often with humor that borders on tears. There is the scene in which the boys turn up for their own burial, the graveyard and trial of old Potter, buried treasure and the escape from the cave. Just how long memories youngsters have of these stories was impressed on me when in Mammoth Cave I asked a group of Scouts what they were thinking of. The response was Injun Joe and Tom Sawyer in the cave. Familiarity with these stories does not breed contempt but rather a delight in hearing them over again. They may and probably have read *Treasure Island*. This should not deter us from using it at the campfire. The meeting with Ben Gunn, the attack on the stockade, the pursuit up the mast by Israel Hands and the struggle over the treasure will appeal to adolescents as long as there are ears to hear and voices to speak.

**SOME USEFUL FRAGMENTS.** Eventually in our quest we find a type of novel that might be termed "fragmentary." Terhune's dog stories are of this nature. In *Lad of Sunnysbank* there are eleven stories concerning Lad in which he rescues children, attacks criminals, protects Master and Mistress and displays the heroic qualities of a devoted dog. Owen Johnson's Lawrenceville stories are similar. *The Varmint*, *The Prodigious Hickey*, *The Tennessee Shad*, *Skippy Bedelle* and *Stover at Yale* are a running series of prep school and college pranks held together by common interest. As might be expected, not all of

the incidents related are uplifting but many of them are Penrod on an older level. In *The Tennessee Shad* we have the efforts of that resourceful gentleman with Doc Macnooder in luring hard cash from all and sundry by such methods as prize-fights, jigger contests and "educating" suckers. The conversation adds much to the tales and might be read where essential for the full appreciation of the story. Tarkington's Penrod stories might be added to this list. It may be said here that these were written for adult consumption and much of the charm in the stories lies in the description or comment. Youngsters in senior high school can appreciate the full flavor of these stories and for such a group, they might be better read than told. The action of the story — what is happening — is the core of the story for the teller and will, therefore, be acceptable to all adolescents. Penrod's story of his Uncle John's depravity, the show, the licking of Rupe Collins and the tar fight are real vignettes of boyhood.

AMERICAN HUMOR. One will look long and almost in vain for humor in novels that can be used at the campfire. Mark Twain points out in his *How to Tell a Story* that the humorous story is an American development and differs from the comic or witty. In his belief, it depends for its effect upon the manner of telling and not upon the material. "I do not claim that I can tell a story as it ought to be told. I only claim to know how a story ought to be told, for I have been almost daily in the company of the most expert story-tellers for many years." That is the clue for the teller in presenting Tom Sawyer or Huck Finn. It is the clue for the Lawrenceville stories mentioned previously. We should remember it with the various books of Ellis Parker Butler whether they concern the guinea pig debacle of Mike Flannery or the mental gyrations of *Jibby Jones*. I wish that somebody would also revive the *Mark Tidd* stories by Clarence Budington Kelland.

TACT. Care should be taken not to offend the race or creed of any of our listeners. Parts of *Westward Ho!* and *Lorna Doone* are distinctly offensive to Catholics and parts of *Ivanhoe* to Jews. Nor do negro youngsters like the word "nigger." This is another way in which story-telling may improve even the best of our accepted and standard works.

Other novels will be discussed in Chapter Six. The score or so mentioned here are merely to illustrate types and methods. The story-teller will do best by using these as a springboard to further reading and the location of other nuggets that lie in the stream of literature.

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## CHAPTER VI

### STORIES FOR READING ALOUD

“Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.”

— *Francis Bacon*

IT IS A RARE YOUNGSTER who will not want a story “read” if he cannot persuade you to “tell” it. And this phase is included in our definition of story-telling. From time to time we have and will continue to note materials that are better read than told — unless you possess a photographic mind and can remember entire pages. Nearly all verse is read. The same is true of plays. In these the form of the presentation is shaped to the contents and we cannot dispense with one without injury to the other. Poetry rendered into prose loses not only its charm of rhythm and sometimes of rhyme but also the magic, the emotional overtones of the poet’s imagery as found in his language and arrangement of words. Tennyson’s *The Charge of the Light Brigade* is more than a heroic attack made by six hundred cavalymen upon a Russian army at the battle of Balaclava in the Crimean War. He puts flesh on these bare bones — gives it life. There is the danger that with some stories we may find only a skeleton left after preparing it for the camp-fire.

THE CLOSE KNIT STORY. In the long story we may have a plot which hangs together so well that any amputation means death. *Ramona* is a closely woven story. The American occupation of California brought about a social revolution including the passing of the missions. Against this background is painted the love story of Ramona and Alessandro and later Felipe. Each character must be interpreted in light of his Indian, Mexican or American environment, each tragedy



realized from the nature of forces at work. Detail is essential to the cumulative intensity of the story. *The Yearling* is another novel with a plot springing from environment and demanding a wealth of detail for the full appreciation of it. Jody sought a playmate in his pet fawn because he had no other. The Baxters and Forresters were frontier people because no other life was possible along the St. John's River. Old Slewfoot was pursued to death when the law of survival intervened. *Ben-Hur* grows out of a cultural pattern that cannot be cut. There is the Biblical story of Christ from the coming of the Magi to the ultimate sacrifice on Golgotha. There is the struggle between Roman and Jew. There is the expression of this cultural conflict in the personal antagonism between Ben-Hur and Messala; a theme of romance in the story of Esther; heroism in the memorable chariot race at the Circus of Antioch. Every word of the race is necessary. We cannot improve on such prose as this:

"Then they heard a crash loud enough to send a thrill through the Circus, and, quicker than thought, out over the course a spray of shining white and yellow flinders flew. Down on its right side toppled the bed of the Roman's chariot. There was a rebound as of the axle hitting the hard earth; another and another; then the car went to pieces; and Messala, entangled in the reins, pitched forward headlong."

**ESSENTIAL DETAIL.** One of the signposts to a story that should be read is, therefore, this tightly knit structure with time and place and character mingled in a coherent whole. Another signpost is that of essential detailed description or information. We find it in the mission life in *Ramona*, in the flora and fauna of *The Yearling*, in the life of Palestine under Roman rule in *Ben-Hur*. There is another kind of factual presentation required for reality as found in Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* and similar pseudo-scientific stories. Every detail of the Nautilus is given until we feel that we live aboard it. The sea animals and plants are accurately portrayed. Names, dates, weights, sizes, technical terms and scientific detail add to the vividness of these stories and are beyond the memory of the ordinary story-teller. Another type of essential detail is that of military school life in the *Shattuck*

*Cadet*. The minutiae of drill, regulations, uniform and custom are necessary to make this story live for the reader. Out of this matrix springs the conflict over discipline between Paul Norris and Nick Stewart.

**SPEAK THE SPEECH.** Specialized conversation may provide another signpost for us. It is found to some extent in all the stories mentioned. In other stories, conversation occupies first place. The brisk and clever interchanges in Owen Johnson's Lawrenceville stories definitely color them. Parts of the Penrod stories would misfire without Tarkington's apt dialogues. Tunis' *The Kid from Tomkinsville* is a corking baseball story where the lingo of the sport is rich and vivid. This is characteristic of many sport stories. We may already be acquainted with the language of the ball lot but the instructions of the coaches, the shouts of the fans and conversation of the players need to be included and we have only one memory to give to our story-telling!

**IN STYLE.** Style is a fourth signpost. As mentioned in the second chapter the *Wind in the Willows*, Irving's *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and Dickens' *Christmas Carol* should be read. Some of Poe's stories are presented with such a neat turning of words that we must read or memorize — or lose the "feel" of things. The quiet humor in Kenneth Grahame's book comes from every word and phrase he uses, the names of the animals, the descriptions of their habitats, their very human fears and hopes, sorrows and joys. The Christmas interlude wherein the field mice come caroling to the lonesome little home of Mole is a holiday treat. An Irving story can be spotted at once by its graceful, almost langorous prose. He recaptures the legendary aura of Dutch New Netherlands so well that we must follow every turn of phrasing to retain it.

Several of these signposts may cluster about a single story. Usually one of them is dominant as we have already noted. We may choose to tell part and read part of a story, particularly a long one. *Moby Dick* might well be told up to the final chase of the White Whale when the three-day hunt would be better read as Melville has written it.

**THE ART OF READING ALOUD.** Reading aloud is as much of an art as telling a story. Virtually the same elements of teller

and audience are required. At first glance it looks easier for there is nothing to memorize. However the physical book intrudes between you and the audience and a higher degree of attention on their part and effort on your part are necessary. Glancing over the audience during natural pauses will enable the story-teller to establish contact with his hearers — but it cannot command the response of direct story-telling. With a restless group any attempt at reading starts off with two strikes against it. At camp we chose rainy afternoons when a group voluntarily gathered around the indoor fireplace. On the other hand, I have read to a troop of Boy Scouts on their meeting night directly after they had tried to pull each other apart in a rough and tumble game. Perhaps the theme — a trapper hauling a dead body out to civilization in the Arctic winter — soothed their savage breasts. At any rate, the third chapter of London's *White Fang* can be recommended for the most dynamic of adolescents. As time was limited, certain passages were blocked out by ringing them in pencil. With one's own books this practice is entirely all right but it is not recommended for books of others, or from the public library. If we followed the pleas of Richard de Bury in his *Philobiblon* we would never mutilate any book. However, the above method was a practical means to a necessary end. We cannot gauge the time required in reading aloud by silent reading as the latter is a much more rapid process. The story should be read aloud again and again until the tempo of its several parts comes naturally. Twenty minutes is probably long enough for a single stretch. Where plenty of time is available, after a brief recess the story might begin again — breaking the tale at some natural point.

As we consider the tall tales, legends, verse and non-fiction in succeeding chapters additional recommendations will be made for reading. At the present let us remember that it is a legitimate device of our craft and has its particular uses.

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## CHAPTER VII

### TELLING TALL TALES

**B**UT I DON'T THINK that is so — " said the story-teller. A shout of laughter went up from the group of listening boys. Of course, it wasn't so. Who would believe a Paul Bunyan yarn? The idea of Paul capturing thousands of black ducks by freezing their feet into a lake and guiding them back to the cook shanty with a rope! Paul had to provide Sunday dinner and lumberjacks have tremendous appetites. This method was as easy as any and up to Paul's usual standard of ingenuity. The boy's funny-bone was further tickled when the story-teller remarked, " Now I think this *is* the true story. Paul had an enormous piece of canvas and when this was spread out under the moonlight it looked like a shining pool of water. The black ducks flying over thought the canvas was a lake and settled down on it. Pretty soon they were asleep. Then Paul quietly crept up, quickly picked up the four corners of the canvas, slung the bag of ducks over his shoulder and strode back to camp triumphant. Sunday dinner was saved! " The boys waited for more yarns. They had heard tall tales before but knew that like Tennyson's brook, such go on forever. And not only stories of Paul the Ol' Logger but a half-dozen other heroes of American folklore.

STORIES WITH GUSTO. Adolescents listen to these stories with as much gusto as they and their parents once dialed in on Baron Munchausen. They are typically American in their fun — plain, unadulterated exaggeration and not the wise-crack, pun or innuendo. Active imaginations on the part of both teller and audience are required. True, the cowboy around his camp-fire and the lumberjack on the deacon's seat in the bunk house may have told them to impress tenderfeet — a legitimate form of diversion in the long evenings. But the luxuriant play of the imagination is the mainspring that makes these tall tales

click for generation after generation. Adolescents may have picked up "Vuz you der, Sharlie?" from the radio but their response to Paul Bunyan is "more!"

Our tall heroes may be adaptations of the fairy tale "giants," or the Biblical Samson and Goliath or even the Indian's Hia-watha. Whatever the source, we find the tales firmly rooted in the native soil of our oral literature. All parts of the country have favorites. In lumber camps from Maine to Washington we find Paul Bunyan, lumberjack *par excellence*. With him, like a train of attendant stars, are Johnny Inkslinger, Big Ole, Hot Biscuit Slim, the Cow Lucy, Babe, the Blue Ox and many others. In West Virginia a counterpart strides the mountains of Appalachia. "Up Eel River" lives Tony Beaver, timber beast of the South. On the plains of the West and Southwest, Pecos Bill rides the literary range, accompanied by his horse Widow Maker and the lamented Slue Foot Sue. Down in Virginia is John Henry, the Negro steel driving man who licked the steam drill but died in the effort. Where oil derricks prick the skies of Texas and Oklahoma, we find Kemp Morgan. He bored a well clear to Brazil that gushed rubber. Fortunately the weather turned cold, froze the column of spouting rubber and Kemp sold it to the tire makers in Akron, Ohio. Yes, quite a man was Kemp Morgan. The sailors have their Stormalong and the railroad workers famous Casey Jones. An avenging hero appears in the form of Strap Buckner.

**LITTLE PLOT STRUCTURE.** Because these stories are the products of story-tellers, they are prime materials for our use. Most of the tales are direct with but little plot structure. The incidents center about a hero and his deeds. The weather is one theme in Paul Bunyan yarns — the Winter of the Blue Snow and the Spring the Rain Came Up From China. One cold, raw spring evening in New Jersey we defied the damp and dark with a batch of these stories. The cold wind was not nearly as bad as that in the famous winter when even the snow turned blue. Coffee set outside to cool, froze so fast it became hot ice. Smoke froze in the air, so did words. Paul was so afraid some of the "explosive" language that froze might set the woods on fire in the spring, that he made the lumberjacks cut them out of the air. The blocks of words were stored in special,

asbestos lined vaults. When they began to thaw and explode, it was like a Fourth of July. Some of the words shook the bunk house. Paul made each jack listen to his own language explode and many were stone deaf ever after. All this was but a fragment of the many things that happened during the Winter of the Blue Snow. The Spring of the famous rain found water pouring up through the cracks in the floors. The rain shot up to the ceiling of the bunk house and collected to a depth of four feet. Lumberjacks had to bend over to get in and out and some of them never stood straight again. Not only that but the rain shot up their pant-legs. Paul brought a lot of umbrellas and these were strapped onto the shoes with excellent results. By the end of the "yarning" the New Jersey climate was forgotten and a gang of happy Scouts turned in, dreaming possibly of the Year of the Good Old Time.

**TALES OF FOOD.** Another theme in Paul Bunyan lore is that of the cook shanty and the meals. There is Sourdough Sam and Hot Biscuit Slim, the flunkies, the horses hauling in the salt and pepper, the battery of pancake mixers, the griddle Paul invented and a dozen other remarkable products of the imagination. Naturally anything concerning food is of interest to adolescents and they delight in the details of Paul's establishment. Babe, the Blue Ox, is better known than the Cow Lucy and twenty minutes can easily be devoted to this marvelous creature. Babe even learned to read because the trails were so crooked they spelled out all the letters of the alphabet; the vowels were spelled a number of times. And strength! Babe could pull anything that has two ends and most things have. He pulled the trails straight so that the lumberjacks on their way to work in the morning would not find themselves coming back at night. The extra trail was coiled up and sold to Boston for streets. Believe it or not! Mighty deeds explain the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls and the Rockies, also why the Great Lakes have no whales and trees do not grow on the desert. In these stories we find the Pyramid Mountain, Round River, the Seven Mississippis, Whistling River and Onion River and even a country where beavers cut fish-poles, earthworms baited them and trout lined up to seize the hook.

**STRANGE ANIMALS.** The animals, or "critters," are as fan-

tastic as any other features. A score of them can be found, including the hodag, the squonk, agropelter, billdad, snoligoster, gumberoo, whistling whimpus and whirling auger. The hodag is found in Wisconsin and Minnesota and is striped like a mackinaw coat, can see only straight up and lives on porcupines. The squonk is an interesting bit of zoology, weeping continually because it is so ugly. The tear-lined trails, especially in winter when the tears freeze, are easily followed. Paul tried capturing one alive but it completely dissolved on the way to the camp and he arrived there with only a bag of water. The gumberoo has an elastic hide that nothing can penetrate but it is highly combustible and explodes easily, smelling like burnt rubber. The wapaloosie is noted for its climbing. Even when made into mittens it will climb an axe handle or whatever it touches. Two books deal with this folklore fauna — *Fearsome Creatures of the Lumberwoods* by William T. Cox, and *Fear-some Critters* by Henry H. Tryon.

AN ABUNDANCE OF MATERIAL. The literature about Paul Bunyan is abundant. Actual examination of the material is the best method of selection. Handy's *Paul Bunyan and His Big Blue Ox* and McCormick's *Paul Bunyan Swings His Axe* are semi-picture books and too fragmentary for our purposes. Bowman's *The Adventures of Paul Bunyan* is for children of an elementary level but material can be found in it. A more advanced approach is taken by Wadsworth in *Paul Bunyan and His Great Blue Ox*. Glen Rounds in *Ol' Paul the Mighty Logger* has done an outstanding job of collecting tales, as has James Stevens in both his *Paul Bunyan* and *Saginaw Paul Bunyan*. Turney has given us some Oregon stories in her *Paul Bunyan Comes West* while Charles E. Brown has added Tony Beaver to his group of stories. Esther Shephard has a collection entitled *Paul Bunyan*. Scattered stories can be found in magazines, *Oklahoma Folk-Say*, the 1932 collection of which contains a ballad, in Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Science, Arts and Letters and other places.

POETRY, TOOL. Paul Bunyan poetry also abounds. Jones has given us *Bunyan's Progress, a Volume of Verse on Paul Bunyan Up To Date*. Alvord has written a volume of verse in *Paul Bunyan and Resinous Rhymes of the North Woods*. A strictly

Paul Bunyan edition is the one by Boni, Liveright & Company, *Paul Bunyan, a Legendary Hero of the North Woods*. Yates has written an imaginary diary of the North Dakota logging days of Paul in his *Paul Bunyan in North Dakota*. This is in verse form. Robert Frost has taken time out in his *New Hampshire* collection to present us with *Paul's Wife*. And not only poetry — but there is a folk-comedy in three acts by Richard L. Stokes — *Paul Bunyan*; and C. J. Finger has presented us with *A Paul Bunyan Geography*.

Separate treatment of the other heroes is limited. For *Pecos Bill* we have Bowman's book, for Tony Beaver the Brown work noted above and Montague's *Up Eel River*. Roark Bradford has written a novelized version of *John Henry* and numerous ballads are quoted in Johnson's *John Henry, Tracking Down a Negro Legend*. Ballads and chanties of Stormalong are scattered in anthologies. There is a book by that name but it deals with the adventures of two English cadets aboard Alan Viller's wind-jammer, the *Joseph Conrad*.

**COLLECTIONS.** There are a number of collections of tall tales of which these three are typical: Boatright — *Tall Tales from Texas*, Meine — *Tall Tales of the Southwest*, and Mackay, *Tall Tales of the Kentucky Mountains*. The Boatright volume is especially good for "critters" with the side wiper, mountain steam winder, milamo and whiffle-pooffe. Kearney has a collection of timber stories in his *Hodag and Other Tales of Logging Camps*. An excellent introduction to the various heroes is given by Shay in *Here's Audacity* — it certainly is! Stormalong, John Henry, Paul Bunyan, Kemp Morgan and Pecos Bill also appear in Miller's *Heroes, Outlaws and Funny Fellows*. There are occasional references to other tall heroes as Mike Fink, John Buck and Finn MacCool but the ones mentioned are the best loved in a gallery of "greats."

**NATURAL SETTINGS.** The appeal of these tall tales is so universal that no particular locale is necessary. Naturally Pecos Bill, the original cowboy, would take on color from a sagebrush setting. The cactus and rattlesnake milk diet, the coyote upbringing and actions of Widow Maker would get more response from Western youngsters than Eastern city dwellers. A Scandinavian dialect adds charm to Paul Bunyan and tall



firs pointing into a starlit night certainly act as stimulants. Oil fields and tunnels are too scarce for common consumption. The adolescent's mind will supply all missing props for whatever hero you choose to dramatize.

Each story has its own lingo. The "Holy Old Mackinaw" of Paul Bunyan, the roll of his lumberjacks as Nels Nelson, Ole Olson, Peter Peterson, Quick Quickerson and Murph Murphison, the vocabulary of peavies, cant-hooks and cross-cut saws, cook flunkies and shanty boys should be remembered. A good memory — but not memorizing — is needed. Most of the stories are already in a conversational tone. Some modifications will be made in committing them to your store of campfire materials.

ADOLESCENTS CAN BEGIN ON TALL STORIES. Tall story material is especially good for the adolescent's own use in venturing into the fine art of story-telling. Their rich imaginations sometimes produce stories as good as anything now in print. At a recent campfire one youngster kept us entertained with a collection entirely new to his audience and significantly rich in poetic feeling. A dozen contributions to my personal stock came from a group that promised to tell me some tall tales in return for an afternoon spent with them. The collection is not remarkable for its elaborate construction of ideas but the imagery used and as by-product the satisfaction gained by the teller. Underlying ideas were that of the boy who ran so fast he left his shadow behind, the boy whose speed burnt the bottoms out of his shoes and cooked his toes to frankfurters, the chicken that borrowed a frying pan to cook its egg but whose tail caught afire and sailed into the sky to become a comet, the boy who killed so many ducks they sank his boat, the drop of rain that knocked at a house one black night to borrow a light to see its way to earth, two leaves that asked to warm themselves on their way South in the autumn. Start a round-robin of tall stories and the evening's campfire will automatically be taken care of. The ultimate satisfaction is in the real enjoyment and delight of youngsters in these stories, or perhaps a line as in a letter that came to my desk one day from "Bobby Wegner" who said my stories were "ferociously funny."



## CHAPTER VIII

### NEW WAYS FOR OLD LEGENDS

**I**N THE THIRD RUNE of the great Finnish epic, the *Kalevala*, composed some three thousand years ago, is a description of the sagaman of old.

Singing ever wondrous legends,  
Songs of ancient wit and wisdom,  
Chanting one day, then a second,  
Singing in the dusk of evening,  
Singing till the dawn of morning,  
Now the tales of old time heroes,  
Tales of ages long forgotten.

The legend of Cassiopeia dates back to 3500 B.C., a Chinese story of the Pleiades to 2000 B.C. The Elder Edda, a collection of Norse stories, was compiled 800 years ago and the Younger Edda by Snorre Sturleson a hundred years later. Homer was writing his Iliad and Odyssey between 950 and 850 B.C., Herodotus in the fifth century and Livy, Ovid and Virgil in the first century before Christ. The legends of Charlemagne were brought together by Italian writers in the 15th century from the ancient lays of bards and legends of monkish chroniclers. We must dig into the very roots of civilization for the folklore of the Norse, the Celts, the Greeks and Romans and other races. Where are the origins of the Arthurian legend, the Nibelungenlied, the Volsunga Saga, the Ossianic cycle, stories of the Cid, of Beowulf, of Grettier the Outlaw, of Frithiof, of Robin Hood and William Tell? In spite of dozens of collections of our North American Indian legends, many are now undoubtedly lost to us. We are handling the oldest literature of the world when we turn to mythology.

**EXPERIENCES OF THE RACE.** The charm of folklore does not lie in its antiquity. Adolescents are creatures of the present. But

they are primitive beings and the experiences of the human race, as expressed in this literature, make a tremendous appeal. Here are explanations of the heavenly bodies, animals and birds and growing things, of natural wonders. Here are deeds of mighty heroes, of knights of the noblest ideals. Here also are human virtues and vices, strengths and weaknesses, sorrow and laughter. They appeal to adolescents because of these intrinsic human elements. And all this is limned by fantasy. Arthur C. Parker well expressed it in the introduction to his *Skunny Wundy* when he said "Oh, that fireplace was a wonderland of marvelous stories and, in the dancing flames of the back logs, we children saw a world of which the older people never dreamed."

At the age of ten or eleven children leave the world of fairy tales. Overnight fairy godmothers, ogres, enchanted pitchers and magic wands become "kid stuff." Still they delight in the imaginative, the fantastic. Examine the amazing adventures in any comic sheet. Notice the appeal of Jules Verne and such series as Tarzan and Tom Swift. Magazines run the gamut from Mickey Mouse to Horror Tales. Twelve-year-old Don from Birmingham, Michigan, did not hesitate to show me his Mickey Mouse magazine and even point out the "swell" stories but he never would have carried a volume of fairy stories. By remembering the survey of mythology given in Chapter Three we can see the tremendous amount of literature we can safely use. Myths, legends, fables, epics and sagas await the silver tongue of the story-teller.

**STORY-TELLING BY THE STARS.** One evening in late autumn we tried some of the classic Greek and Roman legends. At our feet the waters of Cayuga, one of the Finger Lakes, reflected the starlit sky. We lay in the lush grass watching the constellations fill the heavens. Overhead Hercules straddled the sky in a giant H. Had the Scouts heard of the twelve labors of Hercules? How many could they remember? They knew of the golden apples of the Hesperides, the three-headed dog Cerberus, the Lernaean hydra and Mycenaean lion. Nearby was the lyre of Orpheus who searched even the Underworld for his Eurydice. In the north Ursa Major, the Big Bear, showed plainly. What legends could they remember about the Bear? The Iroquois

said the stars were three hunters forever chasing a bear. The Romans said it was Callisto placed in the sky by Jupiter to prevent hunters and dogs from hurting her. The Little Bear is her son Arcas. Basques describe this constellation as a farmer, his housekeeper and servant pursuing two thieves who in turn are chasing two oxen. In England they see three horses drawing a wain or wagon, or a plough. High up in the northeast Cygnus, the Swan, sailed on the Milky Way. Here was the Algonquin's pathway of souls — the stars being their campfires during the night's encampment. The Greeks termed it the road to the Palace of Heaven and the path Phaëthon made in his wild ride with the chariot of the sun. The Chinese and Japanese called it a silver stream; to the Swedish it was a bridge connecting two star lovers while the Pawnee Indians saw in it the dust of racing horses and buffalo. We found our finest star story in the northeast. Cepheus, the King, and Cassiopeia, the Queen, were royally placed, with their daughter, Andromeda, just rising in the east and Perseus, her rescuer, raising his sword over the northeastern horizon. We picked out the constellations and then had the legend — the setting adrift of the infant Perseus, his many adventures, the slaying of Medusa and his happy marriage to Andromeda. By this time taps had come and gone and we adjourned until another night.

Stars offer one of the best methods for introducing legends to youngsters. All nations have contributed to their lore and the problem is not one of acquisition but rather one of selection. For instance, the Pleiades of our winter sky have been noticed by a dozen groups. The Dyaks and Malays of Borneo call them six little chickens following their mother. Eskimos know them as dogs encircling a bear; Indians as dancing warriors, Hottentots as wives who shut out their husbands for poor marksmanship, the Greeks as the daughters of Atlas. Aztecs, Egyptians, Chinese and Hindus have other legends of this star cluster. The winter sky as well as the summer offers a dozen legends, mainly Greek, Roman and North American Indian. In this way a double purpose is accomplished for both folklore and stars are incorporated in the child's experience.

**OUT-OF-DOORS RICH IN LEGENDS.** The out-of-doors is rich in legend. We know the white wood anemone of the spring as

the tears of Venus as she weeps over lost Adonis, the green pine of winter as one who watched faithfully over the new world of the Great Spirit while other trees slept and as a reward stands ever clothed. The sea gulls are the spirits of Halcyone and her husband Ceyx; the bluebird reflects the sky of spring, the owl bears the punishment of the Manitou. In the frogs we find those wicked people who muddied the water Latona and her children wished to drink. The spider is Arachne whom Minerva sprinkled with the juices of aconite for her vanity in weaving. To the ancients fire was the gift of Prometheus and the sun, Apollo's chariot.

Nature legends of the Indians come nearest to the experiences of our youngsters. Keen observers of the wild, they noticed each peculiarity. Why does the tamarack live in the swamp and the oak on the hill? How did the snail gain its marvelous eyes? And the turtle its long neck? The porcupine its quills? How did the bear, the rabbit and the lynx get their bobbed tails? The turkey its gobble and the poplar its trembling leaves? What broke the shell of the tortoise? What caused the gorge of Niagara and the Grand Canyon? The stars and mountains and earth were subject to their imagination and to read Indian legends is to experience one delight after another. The Omaha tell of Rolling Thunder making berries in a particularly beautiful story. Raspberries were made of a handful of rain, a touch of sunset, sap from the maple tree and sweetness of valley grass. Service berries came from a bit of sunrise, a handful of waterfall, three spring buds and the odor of a clover patch. Strawberries, by which he finally caught Mountain Moon, were of sweet moss from the streams, dew of the grass, mountain mist, bees' honey, the trout's bright speckles, the color from red birds and beauty of humming birds.

INDIANS! Legends vary among Indians and those of the tribes indigenous to the story-teller's region should be explored first. In Borland's collection, *Rocky Mountain Tipi Tales*, we find buffalo, elk, coyotes, eagles, mountain lions and sheep, magpies and other elements unfamiliar to children in other parts of the country. Parker's *Skunny Wundy* tales are Iroquois and thus suited to the East as Cushing's *Zuni Folk Tales* reflect the southwest. In this way, we find complementary and contrasting

legends of the same birds and animals. The Iroquois and Piute describe the chipmunks' stripes as coming from a bear's claw but Linderman recounts another version of their being painted on. The Tetons say the owl was given eyes to see in the dark as a reward for watching the new world when the Great Spirit slept; but in the Iroquois legend, it is punishment for failing to close its eyes during a miracle.

Collections of Indian legends are numerous. In the bibliography to this chapter are listed those by Connelley, Curtis, Eastman, Spence and Wood. The St. Nicholas magazine has sponsored a compilation. In part 2 of Brown's *Echoes of the Forest* is a fine review of collections with contents noted. Part 3 is a bibliography of books on legends and traditions. Brinton in his *Myths of the New World* offers background information on Indian symbolism and mythology. In the East the storyteller would want Parker's collection, Canfield's *Legends of the Iroquois* and Curtin's *Seneca Indian Myths*. The latter are given in original form as dictated by the Indians. Also Leland's *Algonquin Legends of New England*. For Michigan we have Wright's *The Crooked Tree* collection centering around Little Traverse Bay. In Minnesota we have LaMere & Shinn's *Winnebago Stories*. Grinnell has written the lore of the Blackfeet, in Gilmore's *Prairie Smoke* are legends of the Pawnee, Omaha and Mandan. Mrs. McLaughlin has compiled *Myths and Legends of the Sioux*. Borland has chosen from the Teton, the Hopi, Blackfeet, Ute and Piute and Omaha. For the Southwest we have Harold Bell Wright's *Long Ago Tales*, Cushing's *Zuni Folk Tales* and Nusbaum's *Zuni Indian Tales* or *Seven Cities of Cibola*. Applegate's *Native Tales of New Mexico* includes Spanish as well as Indian stories. This survey is to indicate the warp and woof of the cloth, not to exhaust the weaving of it.

Most of these tales are direct, with little description and much action. A few Indian words interlarded add to the effectiveness of the telling. Stories of the peace pipe, the making of the tipi, the invention of the canoe and similar items of Indian life also find ready ears. Any camp that has an Indian lore program will find stimulation in using these legends. An Indian campfire is a particularly rich setting for the stories.

The story-teller should try to acquire the style and vocabulary of the Indian and above all, retain his simple dignity.

In the South we find two nature stories in Harris's *Uncle Remus — How Mr. Rabbit Lost His Fine Bushy Tail* and *Why Mr. Possum Has No Hair on His Tail*. These are in Negro dialect and unless one is adept at this and can imitate Harris, the stories would be better read than told. More nature stories can be found in Greek and Roman literature and in such books as Ingersoll's *Birds in Legend, Fable and Folklore*, Newman's *Flowers; Facts and Fables*, Skinner's *Myths and Legends of Flowers, Trees and Fruits*. Star legends are given in Williamson's *The Stars Through Magic Casements* and Olcott's *Book of the Stars for Young People*. Good use can be made of Quinn's books on seeds, roots and leaves, Clute's *Common Names of Plants and Their Meaning*, Fox's *Flowers and Their Travels*. Trees are presented in both fact and fancy in Wildman's *Penn's Woods*, Jepson's *Trees of California* and Humphrey's *Under These Trees*.

Much of the nature story-telling might be called incidental — occurring at the particular moment of interest. However leaves could be brought to a campfire for the telling and we have seen how one group of campers enjoyed the star legends. Its use in creating and holding interest in the various phases of God's wonderland is evident. A full-bodied nature program cannot be presented in camp or council without this cultural background. The campfire can mean as much to the nature counsellor's effectiveness as to any other person and, I suspect, more. The field of folklore is especially rich for the student of Indian lore and nature study.

**LOCAL COLOR.** The Indian and the Negro have contributed most of our American folklore, excepting Paul Bunyan and the tall heroes of Chapter Seven. The Uncle Remus stories have a rabbit as the center of interest and are for a younger group than our audience. Three good collections of Negro folklore are Hurston's *Mules and Men*, Sale's *The Tree Named John* and Stoney's *Black Genesis*. Other American folklore can be located in sources mentioned in Chapter Three, in Field's *American Folk and Fairy Tales* and Skinner's *American Myths and Legends*. Hyatt's *Folklore from Adams County, Illinois* and

Gardner's *Folklore from the Schoharie Hills, N. Y.* are good examples of local collections. Regional books are also available as Judson's *Myths and Legends of the Mississippi Valley and the Great Lakes* and Kane's *Myths and Legends of the Mackinac and the Lake Region*. The latter book is excellent for Mackinac Island with legends of Skull Cave, Sugar Loaf, Fort Holmes, Robertson's Folly and Arched Rock. In the Judson book one notes the Southern flavor of wild turkey, persimmons, raccoon and 'possum. Ralph Paine has contributed his *Book of Buried Treasure* and Dobie's *On the Open Range* and *Coronado's Children* bring legends and treasure yarns of the southwest to our campfire.

**HEROES OF YESTERDAY.** The heroes of folklore have qualities which keep them heroic even in an age of machinery. Each youngster should know the hero of his own native land and those of other countries. From Scandinavia comes foremost the *Volsunga Saga*. Sigurd, one of the Volsung race, engages in many wonderful adventures which make it unnecessary to concentrate on the love element in the saga. For girls the story of Brynhild should be told. This story may be more familiar to your audience as the *Nibelungenlied*. In the German version we have Siegfried and Brunhild with essentially the Icelandic story. Baldwin's *Story of Siegfried* is a very usable volume as is Wilmot-Buxton's *Stories of Norse Heroes*. Mabie's *Norse Stories Retold from the Eddas* concerns the gods — Odin's search for wisdom, the making and finding of Thor's hammer, the apples of Idun, the death of Balder and other tales. It is much easier, however, to tell stories grouped about a central hero than to recount them as distinct episodes. From the Northland also comes *Grettier, the Strong* or the Outlaw whose story Allen French has told. *Frithiof* is another Viking legend and usually found in collections.

From Ireland comes *Cuchulain*, the hound of Ulster. Single handed he defended Ulster which lay under a spell, against the army of Maive and the heroes of Connaught. There is also *Dermot of the Bright Weapons* and *Deidre*. England is the home of *Beowulf*, *King Arthur*, *St. George* and *Robin Hood*. Howard Pyle has written the most complete account of the Arthurian legends. Again the element of romance is great and



for boys stress might well be laid on the quest of the Holy Grail. Starting with this quest the stories of Lancelot, Gawain, Bors, Percivale and Galahad might be given in turn. To me the story of Gawain and the Knight of the Green Chapel is the epitome of devotion. The last battle and the passing of Arthur also form stories of much depth. Beowulf is reminiscent of the Norse sagas and he does save the Danish kingdom from the monster Grendel. In an encounter with another monster, Beowulf loses his life. Like other hero stories, it is one of great adventure. The tales of Robin Hood may be related in verse form as ballads but there are numerous prose collections. Alan a-Dale, Friar Tuck, Little John, King Richard, the Sheriff of Nottingham and Maid Marian should be familiar to all youngsters. In spite of his outlaw character, Robin is a noble fellow and worthy of our note. Hollywood has helped to popularize the legend. For boys the adventure and not romance of the story should be stressed.

The *Legends of Charlemagne* are not easily told or when read, easily understood. For that reason, the best method seems to group them about Roland, Huon of Bordeaux and Ogier, the Dane. Baldwin's *The Story of Roland* and Sherwood's *The Song of Roland* are both excellent and Hyde has written the story of Sir Ogier in *The Singing Sword*. Roland is probably better known than Huon or Ogier. Linked with him is the name of Oliver who fought the courageous duel with Fierabras. The Battle of Roncevaux is one to delight any adolescent even though it ends in the death of both Oliver and Roland. From the 11th century we have stories of the *Cid*, the Spanish hero. The wars fought with the Moors furnish many a page of adventurous reading and telling. The Trial by Swords and the Last Victory are particularly worthy of telling. *St. Denis* of France and *Rustum* of Persia are other legendary figures for our gallery. From classical literature we have Ulysses whose wanderings after the fall of Troy, Homer has given us in the *Odyssey*. In the *Iliad* the siege of Troy is presented us. Virgil furnishes another part of the story with his *Aeneid* in which Aeneas, next to Hector the bravest of the Trojans, makes his way to Italy. Other Greek and Roman legends—mentioned in the first section of the chapter—are to be found in Bulfinch's

*Mythology*, in Hawthorne's *Wonder Book* and *Tanglewood Tales* and in such collections as Gayley's and Sabin's.

PHANTOM ISLANDS AND PLACES. Another type of legend is that exemplified by St. Brandan's Isle. It seems to have arisen with the development of exploration in the 14th and 15th centuries. In the early portolans or sailing charts the island appears near the Canaries. Mention of it is made in such diverse places as Kingsley's *Water Babies*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Irving's works. In the latter's *Wolfert Roost* are the stories *The Phantom Island* and *The Adalanto of the Seven Cities*. More information is given in the Appendix of *Columbus*. This is mainly descriptive and is somewhat prolix. If read, the material should be cut and best results are obtained by absorbing the content of the story and telling it in one's own words. Interestingly, a Seminole legend is to be found in *Wolfert's Roost*. Irving's *Sketch Book* is familiar with its *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *Rip Van Winkle*. In his *Tales of the Alhambra* are a number of Spanish legends. For boys one could use the *Legend of the Arabian Astrologer* and the *Legend of the Moor's Legacy*; for girls the *Legend of the Three Beautiful Princesses* and *Legend of the Rose of the Alhambra*. All of these are better told than read.

This is by no means the alpha and omega of traditional literature. Much more attention should be paid to American regional folklore as indicated in Chapter Three. The work of Alcée Fortier in *Louisiana Folk Tales* and Randolph Vance in *Ozark Mountain Folks* should not be disregarded. There is also Rappoport's *The Folklore of the Jews* to be considered. In the sections on short stories, tall stories and verse, other phases of mythology are developed. Therefore consider this a "fuzz-stick" with which to light the fire, not to keep it going. Adolescents will echo Parker's words, "As I look back upon those scenes, I think of them as indeed enchanted days."

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## CHAPTER IX

### STORIES IN VERSE

“There is no frigate like a book  
To take us lands away,  
Nor any courser like a page  
Of prancing poetry.”

— *Emily Dickinson*

**T**HIS LITTLE BIT of verse has long been a favorite. It epitomizes the spirit of poetry — the pushing back of the frontiers of imagination, the lighting up of distant horizons of the mind. Wordsworth spoke of a time in his early childhood “when meadow, grove, and stream, the earth, and every common sight, to me did seem apparelled in celestial light.” He also speaks of “Shades of the prison-house begin to close upon the growing Boy.” At least in the glow of the campfire the creative spark can be kept alive and the adolescent become an adult with the full measure of his birthright. In a day when personal spirituality is badly needed and an appreciation of human values essential to civilization, poetry should be the first and not the last art contributing to the campfire.

**BUILDING APPRECIATION.** The adolescent is not interested in larks on the wing, throistles, nightingales or cuckoos, in wild thyme and daffodils or wandering lonely as a cloud. Our verse must stir something within the scope of his experience, bring to flower the little buds of sentiment within him. Of course, no adolescent would admit of sentiment. Girls blush and boys protest that it is silly, or sissy. Yet they will sing the most mawkish of sentimental songs without the least embarrassment, forgetting that these are but verse set to music. This indifference and even hostility to poetry is a pose. We may have to re-educate youngsters in the appreciation of the true, the good and the beautiful. Before trying poetry with one group of

city boys we sat for several evenings on a high dune fronting Lake Huron, watching the sun go down in glory with a pagentry of color. Best results are obtained in the correct psychological atmosphere and with an accurate knowledge of both the audience and the materials.

**BASEBALL POETRY!** One spring evening a story-teller decided to try some baseball poetry on the Scouts in Troop 500, Manhattan. "How many of you fellows know *Casey at the Bat*?" he asked. A few hands went up. But on all faces were smiles of eager expectancy. The story-teller opened a small volume and began to partly read and partly recite the familiar story.

"The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day;  
The score stood four to two, with but one inning more to play;"

Gone was the meeting room, the pandemonium of traffic outside, the inexorable clock. Instead, they were in Mudville with Blake on second and Flynn on third, the ninth inning and those two runs needed to tie the score, two outs and Casey as the last hope. They groaned as the umpire called "Strike one!", yelled "Fraud!" with the maddened thousands as he said "Strike two!" and agreed that there was no joy in Mudville when mighty Casey struck out. But for good measure, the story-teller continued with *Baseball in De Park* and *Dorlan's Home-Walk*.

Baseball poems are few and the story-teller turned to another theme of interest. "How about something on camping and the wide open spaces?" he asked. "Service!" somebody punned and a laugh went up. "Fine," said the story-teller and he began the vigorous lines of *The Call of the Wild*. Here also was something they could understand. As Scouts they knew the night-wind, the gleaming stars and Great White Silence. Bliss Carmen's *Camping Song* likewise struck a responsive chord. "And now," he said picking up a volume of Kilmer's, "suppose you fellows hum the music to *Trees* while I read it." The result would not have startled the Metropolitan Opera but the boys entered into it with zest that made the long preparation for the short campfire well worthwhile.

Other nights — in the Adirondacks and amidst the dunes of

western Ontario — found other poems in order. On that moonlight night in the trappers' cabin the poetry dealt with the Yukon Trail and stern deeds beneath the Northern Lights. In duneland, poems of the sea found peculiar appropriateness, the narrative of the Ancient Mariner and the ballad of *Sir Patrick Spens*. Physical environment lends depth to campfire poetry. Essentially, however, one must make use of established interests.

USE THEIR INTERESTS. Sports is one of these. Another is the West with its cowboys and Indians. Girls will thrill to these as much as boys. Bret Harte has contributed at least a half-dozen excellent poems. *Plain Language from Truthful James* informs us how gambler and Chinaman matched wits as well as cards. *The Stage-Driver's Story* is a "tall" one — a "stretcher" that would have done credit to Pecos Bill. Even when three wheels came off, the coach remained in the air because of its great speed. More than that, when the coach halted the wheels rolled up and onto the axles. In his *Spanish Idyls and Legends* we find poems of the early days in California. Here is good Padre Junipero and the missions of San Joaquin, San Francisco, San Gabriel and San Luis Rey. John G. Neihardt has chronicled the days of the fur trade beyond the Missouri in his *The Song of Three Friends* and *The Song of Hugh Glass*. We can relive the adventures of the wandering bands of trappers who explored the rivers and mountains and plains from Canada to Mexico and from Missouri to the Pacific. In the second volume we have the legend of Hugh Glass, an epic of heroism. Joaquin Miller uses the West as a backdrop for his poetry. *The Sioux Chief's Daughter* reflects a familiar love theme and would be more popular with girls than boys. *Kit Carson's Ride* might prove the reverse. The story of a famous outlaw is found in *Joaquin Murrett* and grand landscape in *Where Rolls the Oregon*. Alan Lomax has gathered into an invaluable anthology *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*. Ruth A. Barnes has contributed much in her *I Hear America Singing*. The sections on "Hittin' f'r the Westward," "There's gold in them thar hills," "Out in the West where the riders are ready" and "Homesteadin'" contain enough material for a half-dozen campfires. Not only cowboys but

also stage drivers, hunters, teamsters, trappers, engineers, loggers, miners, ranchmen, sheepherders, shanty men, lumberjacks, cannallers, whalers and section hands pass in review as America unrolls its history. She hits at the core of things when she says "It is not hard to understand why boys enjoy these poems. Most of them deal with work done out-of-doors. The actions are lively, dramatic, dangerous. The scenes are often remote and romantic. The emotions are uncomplicated, easy to sympathize with."

**STIRRING DEEDS AND —** The deeds of famous people appeal to adolescents. They may be Paul Bunyan who was great in more ways than one, or *Paul's Wife* whom Robert Frost has described in his *New Hampshire* collection. Jim Bridger, Captain Kidd, Jim Bludso, Stormalong, Jesse James and Casey Jones have been put into verse. Vachel Lindsay has written *In Praise of Johnny Appleseed*, Longfellow has enshrined forever the legendary *Hiawatha*, Scott wrote lyrically of *Lochinvar*, Tennyson of *The Lady of Shalott* and *Sir Galahad*, Roberts of Joan of Arc in his *The Maid*, Thackeray of *Pocahontas* and Longfellow of *Paul Revere's Ride*. These are but few of many. A casual examination of any anthology of holiday poetry will reveal the abundance of poetry centering about our historic figures.

**STIRRING DAYS.** History presents many a stirring page that poets have set in verse for our campfires. *I Hear America Singing* is replete with pictures of the past. The *Song of Marion's Men* still lends its music to our ears, the *Charge of the Light Brigade* lives on not only on the silver screen but in the flames of the campfire. They are still "hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'" and the Clampherdown's scuppers run again with blood. If this is too gory there is Hervey Allen's *LaFayette Lands* and Whittier's *Barbara Frietchie*. There is no section of the country or part of its history that poets have not set to their music. To those who love every page of its history and every foot of its soil, this should be a double challenge. Let *The Skeleton in Armour* recall the Viking legends for us, *A Yankee Ship and a Yankee Crew* revive our naval traditions and *Columbus* live again in Joaquin Miller's verse.

**OUT-OF-DOORS IN VERSE.** The out-of-doors presents more than hiking and camping to youngsters. Here are valleys, rivers,

mountains, lakes. Here are trees and flowers, animals and birds, the sky with its clouds and stars. Jeans has called it the "mysterious universe" — to adolescents it is also thrilling and a constant challenge to their inquiring minds. Tennyson has given us *The Brook*, Sidney Lanier the river in his *Song of the Chattahoochee* and Bliss Carman the mountains in his *The Cry of the Hillborn*. Nor are deserts and plains omitted. The restless sea has attracted its share of attention. Most of the poems in Alfred Noyes' *Forty Singing Seamen* are usable, Barnes has a section "What Ho! She Blows!" of the wind-jammer days, in Grover's *The Nature Lover's Knapsack* we find over thirty poems on "The Call of the Sea." Birds have their share in the "Birds of Sea and Shore" section of Scollard & Rittenhouse's *The Bird-Lovers' Anthology*. There are ballads of the sea, chanties, inspirational verse like Masfield's *Sea Fever*, descriptive poems as Allan Cunningham's *A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea* and narratives of Longfellow in the *Saga of King Olaf* or Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

Either Bynner's or Celia Thaxter's *The Sandpiper* might well link the sea with the shore. Birds of all seasons have been celebrated in verse — robins and bluebirds, thrushes, phoebes and bobwhites, goldfinches, bobolinks, crows, orioles, tanagers, humming birds, ducks, catbirds, sparrows, blue jays, swallows, blackbirds, hawks, owls, chickadees and even the obnoxious starlings. Birds of sea and shore, lake and river, marsh and moor have their due share. No zone of habitat or season of the year has been neglected. Of all the owl poems we prefer Cornwall's *The Owl* and for herons Maurice Thompson's *The Blue Heron*, Griffith's *Spring Song* for the bluebirds and Mark Van Doren's *Crow*. Katherine Tynan has described for us *The Making of Birds*; there are spring birds in Lowell's *June* and autumn birds in Grover's *Southward Bound*. Animals have not fared so well. A good introduction is in Guest's humorous *My Paw Said So*. Domestic animals do not fit in well with the campfire but rather something from Kipling's *Jungle Books* for the younger group or Lindsay's *Ghost of the Buffaloes* for older ones.

Flowers are a favorite subject and we mean here flowers of the wild, not the tamed out-of-doors. Pansies, marigolds, daf-

fodils and dandelions have their place but it is apart from the campfire. Girls especially will like Dobell's *A Chanted Calendar*. There are as many if not more poems on trees of which Joyce Kilmer's *Trees* is the best known. Henry Van Dyke, Christopher Morley, Bliss Carman have lent their genius to the greenwood. Tennyson has written of *The Oak*, Robert Frost of the *Birches*, Odell Shepherd of *The Elm* and Walter Pritchard Eaton *The Willows*.

Clouds and stars offer more grist for the poet's mill and campfire moments. Try Shelley's *The Cloud* some evening after the sky has been like a Wyeth painting, or together with Cawein's *Old Man Rain* on some wet night. Perhaps that would be a good time for Timrod's *Hark to the Shouting Wind*. The stars are an ever present source of interest. Poems range from Guiterman's tribute to the evening star in *The Starlighter* through Edsall's creation in *Stars*, Hopkins' *The Starlight Night*, Frost's *Ursa Major and Ursa Minor*, Teasdale's *The Falling Star* and her wintry poems of *Night* and *February Twilight*. Another bit of verse for a crisp January night is Robert Graves' *Star-Talk*.

As a background we have poems of the seasons. There is spring and early spring, spring rains and spring weather. April is a favorite month — April's coming, April morning, April rain, April music, April weather and plain April. June is another poetic month with a lessening of poems during the summer. Autumn and Indian summer are rich in poetry; winter has but few and these mainly devoted to the snowy mantle it wears.

**FUNNY POEMS.** Nature poetry is descriptive and to some extent inspirational. The inward eye is necessary for its appreciation. Narrative verse is more easily used at campfires and our ballads and oral literature — our folklore — is of this type. William Lyons Phelps quotes A.E., the noted Irish poet, as saying that narrative poetry is usually second-rate but may be redeemed by genius. Without any doubt a number of poets quoted are second-rate and even third-rate. Our concern with campfire poetry should be its utility. It must have meaning. It must gear in with the tempo of adolescent life. Therefore, humor, even of the doggerel kind, has its place of honor. Carroll's *The Walrus and the Carpenter* fits the fifteen-year-old



as well as the five-year-old. Guiterman has written some delightful nonsense in his *Strictly Germ-Proof*, *The Legend of the First Cam-u-el* and poems already mentioned. All boys will like Edgar A. Guest's *Forgetful Pa* and Homer Roberts' *Pa's Chickens*. There is Trowbridge's *Darius Green and His Flying Machine*, Carryl's *Robinson Crusoe's Story*, Si Hubbard from Carl Sandburg's *The American Songbag*. In Daly's *Little Book of American Humorous Verse* are a number of dialect poems as *Leetla Georgio Washeenton*. If there are Italian youngsters in the group it might be politic not to use them, the same being true of Irish, Scandinavian, Scotch, German and other nationalities. Negro children may object to the dialect in Countee Cullen's sermon about creating the world or Paul Laurence Dunbar's *Discovered* (for girls) or *When de co'n pone's hot*.

A poetry campfire should end either with humor or something inspirational. Kipling's *If* will immediately suggest itself, but there is also *Reveille* from Housman's *Shropshire Lad*, *Opportunity* by Edward R. Sill, Leigh Hunt's *Abou Ben Adhem*, Dunbar's *Keep a-pluggin' Away* and *A Prayer*, Scott's *My Native Land* from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. They may not grasp the full message in these short pieces yet the slightest quickening makes their use worthwhile. This is particularly true of the Psalms. The *Twenty-Third Psalm* is familiar to most adolescents. There is no reason why they should not hear the music and the divine words of the *Eighth*, the *Nineteenth*, the *Twenty-Fourth*, the *Ninety-Third* or *Ninety-Fifth* or *One Hundred and Twenty-First*. With the Bible at hand we do not have to search for inspirational material.

**NEW OLD BALLADS.** Ballads and Chanties have been mentioned in this and previous chapters. *Stormalong* and *Blow the Man Down* are part of the repertoire of many youngsters. Ballads are essentially romantic with certain repetitive features and are usually accompanied by music. The radio has familiarized the cowboy ballad and to a lesser extent the mountaineer ballad. But we should not neglect the *Robin Hood Ballads* or *King John and the Abbot* or Browning's *Hervé Riel*. Humor is to be found in some of the old Elizabethan ballads such as *Get Up and Bar the Door*. If one can sing them with the verve

of Alan Lomax, carrying the melody with a guitar or a banjo, the pleasure is that much greater. Among the numerous sources, these seem to be outstanding — Lomax's *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*, and *American Ballads and Folksongs*, Louise Pound's *American Ballads and Songs*, Carl Sandburg's *The American Songbag*, Olcott's *Story-Telling Ballads*, Mabie's *Book of Old English Ballads* and Quiller-Couch's *Oxford Book of Ballads*. Many of these can be easily dramatized with youngsters taking parts as in *King John and the Abbot* or pantomiming as another reads as we did with *Get Up and Bar the Door*.

Ballad, song and poem have the basic element of rhythm. The cowboy with his banjo or guitar and the mountaineer with his fiddle have sung many a ballad into the ears of America. Some poems are in praise of such lowly instruments. Service praised the harmonica in his *The Song of the Mouth-Organ*, Kipling wrote *The Song of the Banjo* which he called "the war-drum of the White Man round the World!" Dunbar has contributed *A Banjo Song*. We have suggested that the group hum the melody of *Trees* as it is read. Other combinations can be devised until poetry becomes a natural medium of expression around the campfire. The nature program in camp will benefit from this implementing with poetry. I have yet to find a verse in praise of reptiles but recently did read *The House-keeper* by Charles Lamb with apologies to American snails. The Indian lore program is another to implement with poetry. *Hiawatha* may be shop-worn by school teachers but even "second-hand" materials take on new luster in the campfire. Armer's *Waterless Mountain* has some fine Indian lyrics but transcriptions are few and more properly belong with songs.

LONG POEMS. It is not wise to break a long poem in two. The magic of the moment may be lost. On the other hand such long poems as *Hiawatha*, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Evangeline*, *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, *The Courtship of Miles Standish* or *The Sioux Chief's Daughter*, may be told with the more striking passages read. One story-teller presented *Pippa Passes* in this manner. If you recall Browning's poem, Pippa has a song which she sings on this particular holiday as she goes out to gather flowers. This song is sung at intervals,

each time bringing joy to someone whether the wealthy dame, the Duke, the priest or the farmer. The story-teller introduced Pippa's song at the psychological intervals, reading it in full but otherwise giving a prose version of this poem.

**MAKE YOUR OWN ANTHOLOGY.** Good anthologies were mentioned in Chapter Three and a dozen special ones in this chapter. They are to be preferred to collected works of an author. For 25¢ one can now buy 249 poems by 77 authors in *The Pocket Book of Verse*. The most satisfactory anthology is the self-made one, copying out poems that appeal to you, clipping elusive ones from magazines and even, when the divine spark glows in you, writing your own. Youngsters also know what they like and will give suggestions. They may consider that the boy who stood on the burning deck was "swell" poetry and a camp yell is superior to Vachel Lindsay's *The Congo*. The campfire, however, can smooth the sharpest edge and polish the roughest diamond.

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## CHAPTER X

### THE USE OF NON-FICTION

NOT SO LONG AGO a school librarian tried to help a youngster select his books. She handed him a volume on airplanes. He shook his head but said nothing. She tried a book of trains, then one on ships, but without results. She was about to give him one on automobiles when the boy burst out with, "Ain't you got something *human!*" Truth may be stranger than fiction but facts as facts mean nothing to adolescents. Socializing factual information is a necessary method in the use of non-fiction. These new facts must tie in with the body of knowledge already possessed. There must be "meaning"! The boy above evidently wanted a book with people in it, for youngsters, next to being interested in themselves, are interested in other bipeds. However, all information does not have to be centered about biography or autobiography. What happens to other people is of interest but what happens to the adolescent *per se* is of even more importance. If, in addition to noticing the grass is wet at night he realizes that this dew in falling indicates a fair tomorrow — a day in which he can swim or tramp or enjoy God's out-of-doors, this fact becomes a significant one.

SPEAKING OF STARS. One night at camp we began to talk about the stars. Which star was nearest? Which farthest away? What gave them their various colors? How old were they? What were they made of? The questions flew thick and fast. The obvious ones taken care of, the nature counsellor in the rôle of story-teller explained the Milky Way — that glittering rim of our universe. He told them of burnt-out stars — "dark" stars that could not be seen but still existed, of exploding stars, of variables, of globular clusters and nebulae, star dust and galaxies. He explained the spectroscope, how distance, size, temperature, speed, movement and star elements were determined. The night sky ceased to be simply a mass of jewelled

lights. It became a marvelous pattern of celestial wonders, a new field for mental exploration. On later evenings the campers asked about planets and meteors, comets and the aurora borealis, telescopes and famous astronomers. Here was an informal, voluntary, "free teaching" situation in which youngsters' imaginations caught fire from the enthusiasm, keen knowledge and apt presentation of the story-teller.

**THE HILLS OF HOME.** Geology can be made even more fascinating than astronomy. In many parts of the country adolescents can dig out from shale and limestone the fossil remains of trees, plants, insects, crustacea and simple animals. Some may have even visited the Petrified Forest of Arizona. Larger fossils are usually to be seen only in museums. When I was fourteen a limestone quarry suddenly resolved itself into trilobites, brachiopods, crinoids and gastropods for my delighted exploration and collection. Some pot-holes on an island in the river became clues to the story of the gigantic mile-thick ice sheet which covered New York State during its glacial entombment. Terraces on either side of the Mohawk Valley revealed the lakes left by the melting ice. Glacial till, smooth boulders and striae served to complete the picture of the ocean of ice that engulfed part of our continent only yesterday as geologists reckon time. The limestone strata lifted the curtain of an earlier period when the Adirondacks were an island in summery seas. A deep fault in the Valley revealed the syenite of the once molten interior — at that time buried five miles below the surface and today bearing the rush of trains and automobiles. And the central Mohawk Valley is in no ways distinctive for its geology. The walls of the Grand Canyon, the buttes of the Southwest, Crater Lake in Oregon, the geysers of the Yellowstone, the Dells of Wisconsin, the oil fields of Oklahoma and coal beds of Pennsylvania and West Virginia — all of these have exciting stories to tell. The possibilities are well shown to us by Frederic Brewster Loomis in his *Field Book of Common Rocks and Minerals*. Here we have the stories of two pebbles, one of common quartz that tells of the ice sheet, the other of schist and granite of Paleozoic times and the ancient Connecticut Valley. By following these two pebbles from their origin to their final resting places, a wealth of geology is easily set forth. Sand grains, as well as pebbles, have stories to

tell. Every mountain and valley, lake and river has something to contribute to the campfire. Let us understand the earth as well as walk on it.

**TALKING ABOUT MOTHER NATURE.** The wings of a butterfly, the eye of an insect, the leaf of a tree and unfolding of a fern or development of a lichen make interesting stories. Much more so can animals and birds. In the Preface to Chapman's *Wilderness Wanderers* we read, "It is doubtful if fictionized nature material could be made so interesting or entertaining as accurate accounts of what animals do while going about their work and play in their perfectly wild state, for often they act and react astonishingly like humans." The Yellowstone National Park is the locale of this book which well proves the point. The adventures at a beaver pond and North for mountain goats are two sections especially worth noting. Ivan T. Sanderson in *Animal Treasure* and *Caribbean Treasure* provides grist for the story-teller. There is an incident in the former book where the author gets trapped in a bat cave by a fall of rock. He succeeds in crawling over a ledge into another cave to find this a leopard's den. After several bad moments an escape is made. Martin Johnson's books are replete with stories. In *Safari* the tales of waterhole thrills, the attack by rhinos and the lions of Tanganyika are as exciting around an American campfire as one in Africa. Beebe introduces the sea in *Half Mile Down*, *Galapagos* and other books. Chapman brings us the birds in *My Tropical Air Castle* and similar volumes. The nature material of Ernest Thompson Seton, C. G. D. Roberts and Samuel Scoville has already been discussed in Chapter Four. Peattie's *Prairie Grove* presents a study in ecology that might well serve as a model for the story-teller's own locale.

This brief ramble in astronomy, geology and natural history does not exhaust the sciences. Physics and chemistry can and have been used. The arts — painting, music, architecture and others — should be employed. The cultural environment in all its fascinating facets is the true sphere of the story-teller. Naturally the play of personalities as found in biography, history and travel offers the most fertile field for us to cultivate. In Chapter Three an indication was given of the scope of these materials. Let us investigate them more carefully.

**EXPLORE YOUR ENVIRONMENT.** Adolescents are intent on ex-

ploring *their* environment. Some of it is evident, some of it is included in their education, part of it requires digging. If he lives along one of America's important rivers, some of this digging has or will be done for him. The history of the Kennebec, the James, the Hudson, the Wabash, the Arkansas, the Upper Mississippi, the Powder and Suwannee has already been written as part of *The Rivers of America* series. Constance Lindsay Skinner, in her essay "Rivers and American Folk" which inaugurated this series, remarks that, "The natural rhythm moving the pioneer life of America forward was the rhythm of flowing water. It is as the story of American rivers that the folk sagas will be told." Youngsters living along the Hudson should know of the Palatine tar-makers, the tragedy of Major André, its whaling days, the tin-horn rebellion and early steamboats and packets. In the South where the Suwannee flows into the Gulf of Mexico from the dismal Okefenokee Swamp, the Seminoles and river folk, sandhill cranes, alligators and cottonmouth rattlers hold attention. In Wyoming we ride the Powder River with a medley of Indian tribes, cowboys, rustlers, long horns and settlers. Sitting Bull, Frémont, Jim Bridger, John Colter and Custer stalk its pages. These books, each of which have a bibliography, are but examples of many which will serve as spring boards.

Donaldson's *A History of the Adirondacks* is another regional example, mountains instead of rivers. One reads of Dr. Trudeau pioneering in the treatment of tuberculosis at Saranac, of Theodore Roosevelt becoming president at North Creek, of Stevenson writing his *Master of Ballantrae* while an invalid at Saranac, of John Brown leaving his North Elba home for death at Harper's Ferry. We get a picture of the backwoods guide in Old Mountain Phelps whom Charles Dudley Warner has immortalized in his *In the Wilderness* in the essay "A Character Study." Bits of lore are revealed in the names of mountains and lakes and streams. Raquette Lake reminds one of Sir John Johnson's raid on the Mohawk Valley in 1776. Ampersand has several explanations, including that of Henry Van Dyke in his *Little Rivers*. Roberts' *Trending into Maine* along with Coffin's *Kennebec* relive for us some grand forgotten days, of Arnold's march in the Revolution and Maine regi-

ments in the Civil War, of sea captains and lumberjacks, of Father Râle and Parson Bailey. Another type is Jacqueline Overton's *Long Island's Story*. Here is Captain Kidd and Nathan Hale, the Revolutionary War in the Battle of Long Island at Gowanus Bay, the War of 1812, whaling days at Sag Harbor, the Roosevelts at Oyster Bay. The *American Guide Series* under the WPA Federal Writers is adding more fuel to our campfire by its description of both states and certain regions. Mention has been made of its *The Berkshire Hills* and Guides are available at present for most of the states.

**ADVENTURE AT YOUR DOORSTEP.** In many of these books history and biography are intermingled with a mass of information on flora and fauna, agriculture, manufacturing, economic, social and intellectual life. History and biography for almost any section are, however, easily at hand. Lodge and Roosevelt in writing their *Hero Tales from American History* say, "It is a good thing for all Americans, and it is an especially good thing for young Americans, to remember the men who have given their lives in war and peace." Most adolescents know of Columbus and Magellan, Vasco da Gama and Leif Ericsson, Cortez in Mexico and Pizarro in Peru. But do youngsters living along the Hudson know of Verrazano and Hudson, those in Florida of Ponce de Leon and Narváez, in Georgia of De Soto and Oglethorpe, in the Southwest of Coronado and de Vaca, along the Mississippi of LaSalle, Marquette and Joliet? The pages of America are crowded with hundreds of personalities of a dozen nations waiting for the story-teller to relate their adventures. Our struggles toward nationhood have brought forth noble characters. Let us tell again of Washington at Valley Forge and Trenton; Clark wading through icy waters to capture Vincennes; Davy Crockett dying at the Alamo; Pickett's gallant Virginians at Gettysburg; Perry at Put in Bay; Jackson at New Orleans; Boone in Kentucky; Roosevelt at San Juan Hill. The list is endless. Lincoln, Lee, John Paul Jones, Farragut, Decatur, Wayne, Herkimer, Stark, Arnold before his ignominy, Johnson, Stonewall Jackson, Lawrence, Reid, Sheridan.

**EXPLORING OUR YESTERDAYS.** Explorers and frontiersmen capture our imagination. The Lewis & Clark Expedition across



the Rockies from the Missouri to the Columbia is a chronicle of heroism. Julia Davis in *No Other White Man* and Moorehead in *New World Builders* detail the story. Howard's *On the Trail with Lewis & Clark* tells of Sacajawea, the Indian girl who proved both guide and protector. South of this trail, starting at St. Louis and following the Platte, the Snake and the Columbia is the famous Oregon Trail. Parkman has told the story in his *Oregon Trail*. Some of his description should be read: the hunting of the buffalo, the Ogillallah villages, scenes at Fort Laramie and war parties. Laut's *The Overland Trail* brings the present to the past. Here we find Jim Bridger, Frémont, Marcus Whitman, Ezra Meeker and the Astorians. The Santa Fé Trail, the Old Spanish Trail, the later California Trail and many others should glow again in the gleam of our campfires. Trapping days of the Rockies, when Ashley's Mountain Men braved Indians, rapids, blizzards and starvation to secure their furs, are told for us in Vestal's *Mountain Men*. Every chapter is a story of heroics, of John Colter's race with the Blackfeet, the Taos revolt, the battle of Pierre's Hole and the stoic journey of old Hugh Glass as mentioned in our Chapter Nine. Edna Kenton's *The Indians of North America* is a compilation from the *Jesuit Relations*. These are reports sent to Quebec by some three hundred Jesuit missionaries between 1611 and 1764. They describe the life of the Indian as found in Labrador and along the Mississippi, in the Mohawk Valley or beyond the Great Lakes. No better source materials exist for presenting the Iroquois or Algonquin and nearly all of them can be used at the campfire. The martyrdom of Father Jogues at Auriesville is one of the unforgettable stories. Britt has collected more historic figures in *The Boys' Own Book of Frontiersmen*. Another type of story appears in such books as Browne's *Real Legends of New England*, Reynard's *The Narrow Land*, Shaw's *Legends of Fire Island and the South Shore* and Baldwin's *An American Book of Golden Deeds*. Boys will be thrilled by the story of young Nathan Beman who guided Ethan Allen into Ticonderoga and victory, of young Randolph Noble summoning aid to the Battle of Bennington, of Ephraim Webster swimming the icy Lake Champlain with messages, of Paul Revere riding through the night of Massachusetts. Girls

will admire Betty Zane, heroine of Fort Henry, Lydia Darrah of Philadelphia, Mina Lamourrie warning the Micmacs or Madelon of Verchères defending the fort against the Iroquois.

**THE WORLD IS A STAGE.** The world is our stage as well as Shakespeare's. Hollywood's version of Stanley in Africa stirred many an adolescent heart in spite of its deliberate errors. Young Ellis Glynn became so absorbed with the ascent of Mount Everest that he read everything available, wrote themes on it for school and presented me with a map of how "his" expedition would conquer this cloud-cleaver. A dozen stories cluster about Everest — tales to be found in Younghusband's *Everest the Challenge* and *The Epic of Mt. Everest*, in Noel's *The Story of Everest* or Bates' *Five Miles High*. Associated books are Knowlton's *Naked Mountain*, Bechtold's *Nanga Parbat Adventure* and Tilman's *Ascent of Nanda Devi*. From there one might travel through the Gobi Desert with Roy Chapman Andrews or follow the Silk Road into Mongolia with Sven Hedin. Africa reminds us not only of Stanley and Livingstone but also of Mungo Park and Heinrich Barth. Australia should not be neglected in this recital. The Poles by their inaccessibility have lured the bravest of the brave. Ellsberg's *Hell on Ice*, the story of the Jeanette, Hall's *Nansen* with his Fram, the Abruzzi-Cangi expedition, the air explorations of the Norge and Italia, Peary's own account of his discovery of the Pole, are high voltage campfire material. In the Antarctic we find Cook, Sir James Ross, Shackleton, Scott, Wilkins, Byrd and Amundsen who discovered the South Pole. The diary that Scott kept until his frozen fingers no longer moved is inspiring though tragic. Shackleton has his adventures written in *Arctic Journey* and *South*. Byrd has contributed a number of books of which *Alone* offers most to the story-teller. Scouts should be made acquainted with Siple's *A Boy Scout with Byrd* and another phase is to be found in Gould's *Cold. Heroes of the Farthest North and Farthest South* by Maclean and Fraser is a good survey. Stefansson relates a number of first-rate campfire stories in his *Unsolved Mysteries of the Arctic*. On the fringe of the Arctic are the two books by Dillon Wallace, the *Lure of the Labrador Wild* and the *Long Labrador Trail*. Hunting for the headwaters of the George River brings death from starva-

tion to Hubbard and only an indomitable will saves Wallace from perishing in rapids and blizzards. Key's *The Story of 20th Century Exploration* and Gable's *Boys' Book of Exploration* deserve careful study by the story-teller.

IN THE MIDST OF HEROES. Our heroes live in many places under many names. Kings and queens, poor boys and rich, saints and inventors, men of danger and daring, famous mothers, musicians and artists, aviators and scientists. Two recent developments in juvenile biography prove helpful to the story-teller, one in the lives of such authors as Scott, Hawthorne, Emerson, Holmes, Shelley and Stevenson; the other for musicians as Bach, Mozart and our own Stephen Foster. Individual lives, whether biographical or autobiographical, line the shelves of libraries. Lowell Thomas' biographies of Count von Luckner, Colonel Lawrence and George Rogers Clark, Will James' *Lone Cowboy*, Twain's *Joan of Arc*, Repplier's *Père Marquette* and *Mère Marie of the Ursulines*, lives of Knute Rockne, Buffalo Bill, Madame Curie, Florence Nightingale, Edison and a hundred others. Collections are numerous and specialized. A few have already been mentioned. Others are Fraser's *Heroes of the Air*, Chandler's *Famous Mothers and Their Children*, Bolton's *Famous Men of Science*, Williams-Ellis' *Men Who Found Out*, Lang's *The Book of Saints and Heroes* and Stone's *Our Presidents*. Adolescents will find heroic material in Walter Reed, Madame Curie, Lord Lister, Louis Pasteur, Michael Faraday and William Harvey in their fight for humanity on the frontiers of science. The use of the lives of saints depends upon the group, for each country has its own patron saint; some do not believe in saints and for Jewish youngsters, prophets of the Old Testament would be more suitable. Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Patrick of Ireland, Saint George of England, Saint Francis Xavier, Saints Margaret and Andrew of Scotland, Saint David of Wales, Saint Denis of France, Saint Elizabeth of Hungary are but few of many. Which reminds us that our American missionaries should not be overlooked. Marcus Whitman of Oregon, Peter Cartwright of the Kentucky frontier and David Elkin who buried Lincoln's mother would appeal to Protestant youngsters. Marquette, Jogues and R  le already mentioned should be joined with

Father Hennepin, DeSmet, Dollier and Junipero Serra for Catholics. Of course, the life of Christ precedes all biography.

Legends and verse are also non-fiction — the distinction being made in this chapter of fact rather than fancy. Only the summits of this literature have been climbed, the valleys still remain. Let us as story-tellers blaze new trails that will lead future generations to our national culture.



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